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HORACE WALPOLE AND THE ENGLISH NOVEL

A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE
OF "THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO"

1764-1820

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TO
MY TEACHER AND FRIEND
AMARANATHA JHA

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K.K.M.

CONTENTS

	PAGES
Foreword	xi
CHAP.	
I. Horace Walpole and <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> : A General Introduction	I
II. The Dominance of Realistic Fiction and Rising Romanticism: 1764-1777	22
III. The Rise of the "School of Walpole": 1778- 1788	55
IV. The Evolution of "The Tale of Terror": 1789-1794	103
V. The end of Walpole's Creative Influence and the causes of its decline: 1795-1797	142
VI. The Reputation of <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> : 1797- 1820	166
APPENDIX A. A Chronological List of the Editions of <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> from 1764 to 1820	172
APPENDIX B. A Chronological List of "Romantic" Novels published between 1762 and 1797	173
Bibliography	185
INDEX	193

FOREWORD

PERHAPS there is no other single writer in English literature whose name is associated with the rise of a "school" so definitely as that of Horace Walpole. *The Castle of Otranto* has been abused, criticized, praised, and even laughed at; but scarcely any one has ever questioned its historical importance. Professor Raleigh speaks of Walpole as "the inaugurator and, in some sense, the founder of a literary movement that took Europe by storm";¹ W. L. Phelps is no less emphatic and asserts that "*The Castle of Otranto* . . . that threw England into a fever of excitement . . . is more responsible than any other one book for releasing the flood of tales of mystery";² while Henry A. Beers, in his *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*,³ quoting Leslie Stephen on Horace Walpole says, "His initiative in literature has been as fruitful as his initiative in art. *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysterious Mother*, were the progenitors of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, and probably had a strong influence upon the author of *Ivanhoe*." And even Miss Birkhead in her more specialized work on the terror novel comments on the significance of *The Castle of Otranto* "because of its power in shaping the destiny of the novel."⁴ In face of this chorus of critical opinion—and instances can be multiplied considerably—an attempt to estimate the influence of Walpole's Gothic story stands in need of no justification. But even if it did, another and a better reason is not lacking.

During the last decade or so, considerable attention has been paid to the Gothic romance, and among the works on the subject, those of Eino Railo,⁵ and Edith Birkhead stand

¹Walter Raleigh *The English Novel*, 1903, p. 226.

²William Lyon Phelps *The Advance of the English Novel*, 1919, p. 84.

³Henry A. Beers *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, 1899,

P 237.

⁴*The Tale of Terror*, 1921, p. 20.

⁵*The Haunted Castle*, 1927.

out conspicuously. But the study has been concentrated mostly on the theory of the Terror Novel, on its constituent elements, on its staging and artistic paraphernalia. Little remains to be added with regard to what the terror novel actually *was*; but from the historical point of view there is a deficiency. The work of Miss Birkhead, the more historical of the two, summarizes nearly three decades following the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*, thus:

"The enthusiasm which greeted Walpole's enchanted castle [1764] and Miss Reeve's carefully manipulated ghost [1777], indicated an eager desire for a new type in which the known and familiar were superseded by the strange and supernatural. To meet this end Mrs. Radcliffe suddenly came forward [1790-94] with her attractive store of mysteries, and it was probably her timely appearance that saved the Gothic tale from an early death."¹

The dates certainly are significant.

To the above list we have only to add the names of *Sir Bertrand*, *A Fragment* (1773), and *The Recess* (1783), and we exhaust the works of the thirty years after the publication of Walpole's story dealt with in these studies.² Therefore, if any further justification for tracing the influence of *The Castle of Otranto* were needed, it is provided by the vagueness that still envelops the beginnings of Gothic romance, the period in which the influence is first likely to show signs.

It is also important to explain what interpretation is put on this word "influence." If we were to interpret it in a wide and vague sense, and include in this survey all the books which had a generic affinity with Walpole's Gothic story, then the subject of this work might well change its title and claim for itself the wider designation, "The History of the Terror Novel." This is not the real object. If, on the other hand, the words were narrowed to mean only parallelisms and direct borrowings, then the subject might be reduced to a consideration of half-a-dozen works of fiction only. But influence certainly means more than that.

¹*The Tale of Terror*, 1921, III, p. 38.

²Some titles have been added to the above mentioned works in J. M. S. Tompkins' *The Popular Novel, 1770-1800*, a book published since the above was written.

Immortality is not an attribute of the gods of Taste. They have their day and cease to be. After a time men weary of a literary movement also; its force gets spent; and the germs of change infect the air. New ideals are sought to replace old ones. The "age psychology" represents a nebulous and shapeless mass of discontentment. At that critical moment, the initiative of one sympathetic personality or work can strengthen and illumine and give unconscious direction to this potential energy. A precedent of departure, a line of action is necessary to inspire and give courage to the timid and the vacillating. And if the lead be followed, we can say that, until the moment when phases of the archetype have evolved to the stage of common conscious literary property, any fresh production developing the plot, style, or suggestion of the stimulant source reflects the "influence" thereof. It is in this sense that the word is interpreted in the following pages. The work does not aim at being a history of the terror novel up to 1820; nor is it a mere enumeration of plagiarisms.

To show how and in what direction *The Castle of Otranto* started to exercise an influence; to trace its first manifestations and its gradual rise; and to indicate when and why it ceased to be an active creative force; in short, to estimate the real significance of *The Castle of Otranto* and the place it occupied in the period 1764-1820 is the object of the present study.

CHAPTER I

HORACE WALPOLE AND "THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO"

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I

IT is desirable in estimating the historical importance of any literary work to form an idea of its background. But when the work is supposed to have initiated something, inaugurated a new era, given an impetus to effort in new directions, this becomes indispensable. Old and New are terms of comparison. We cannot understand the one without a knowledge of the other. And to appreciate fully the significance of *The Castle of Otranto* we must connect it with the past and trace its antecedents. The tricks of light and shade, colour and line, which are best revealed by looking at a picture in perspective, are entirely lost in a too close scrutiny. It will therefore only be meet to give a perspective of tendencies in fiction when Horace Walpole wrote his famous novel.

The history of English fiction from the end of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth is the history of the rise of realism and the decreasing popularity of romance. A change was taking place in the general outlook. The spirit, which resulted in the formation of the Royal Society and the utilitarian philosophy of Hobbes, influenced literature also in almost all its phases. In spite of their extreme popularity, the ponderous romances of La Calprenède and Scudéry which were translated in the sixteen-fifties never struck root in the English soil. Fiction in England was taking a different course. Mrs. Behn, her successors Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Haywood, Swift and Defoe, and the periodical essayists were paving the way for the great mid-eighteenth century quartette. And if it be

true that the novel proper as distinguished from romance needs "a sophisticated, self-conscious, critical society,"¹ about the middle of the century the time for its appearance was certainly ripe. Accident favoured the appearance. A meddling bookseller with a passion for preaching and with years of experience in penning amatory epistles for love-sick women, was asked by friends to give to the world a series of *Familiar Letters*. The suggestion was taken up; memory yielded an incident of real life heard years ago; and the bookseller, to use his own word, "slipped" into the authorship of a best-seller. This happened in the year 1740, when *Pamela* was born. But this was only one part of the picture. *Pamela* was to have a cousin soon. The hot-house morality of Richardson's sophisticated vestal went against the grain of the robust and full-blooded Fielding. The result was *Joseph Andrews* in 1742. Realistic fiction which had been making an insidious progress since the end of the seventeenth century was at once raised to unprecedented perfection and dignity. The years 1740 to 1760 that witnessed the appearance of nearly all the works of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne, are perhaps the most decisive in the evolution of the English novel. The victory of realism was complete. So great was the vogue of this new type of fiction (and the list of novels given in the Preface to George Colman's *Polly Honeycombe* in 1760 gives a fairly accurate idea of the most popular reading of the period), that in the Prologue we are informed,

"Cassandra's Folios now no longer read,
See Two Neat Pocket Volumes in their stead."

The publication of *The Castle of Otranto* only four years later strikes one as entirely out of joint in this setting.

But there is another side to the question. Romance and idealism are hard to kill, and allowance must be made for a satirist's exaggeration. While the school of common sense was dominating literary ideals, romances found no champion to espouse their declining cause. On the contrary, to beat the last signs of life out of a dead horse, a stalwart like

¹E. A. Baker *The History of the English Novel*, 1924, I, 22.

Warburton was not unwilling to take up arms, and to the second edition of Jarvis's translation of *Don Quixote* (1749), is added a supplement on romances by the "learned writer, well known in the literary world." The old romances are to the doctor only "a strange jumble of nonsense and religion";¹ they represent to him nothing more than "fooleries" full of "the monstrous embellishments of enchantments";² and in another place he thinks them the product of "barbarous" times.³ This, as a matter of fact, was the accepted view about the Middle Ages and their products. The first sentence in Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) runs: "The ages, we call barbarous, present us with many a subject of curious speculation." But in spite of the onslaughts of Warburtonian and other criticism, there is reason to believe that the number of those people who paid the deeper and unconscious homage of reading and thoroughly enjoying these romances was by no means negligible. Romance may have lost her beautiful plumage, her glory, and her status, but she retained nevertheless her dominion over the hearts of men—and particularly women—of the time. Chivalric romance may have ceased to be a living vital type—the ground long left fallow⁴—but there were people who could not away with romance. In Leonora's library, which the *Spectator* visited in 1711,⁵ to deliver a letter from Sir Roger, he found *Cassandra*, *Cleopatra*, *Astraea*, *The Grand Cyrus*, with a pin stuck in one of the middle leaves, Pembroke's *Arcadia*, and *Clelia*, which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower. *The Female Quixote* appeared a year after Fielding's *Amelia* and Smollet's *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*. On the positive side, it is one more instance of the rise of the rationalist spirit and of the disrepute into which romance was falling. But people do not satirize fashions absolutely

¹A part of this supplement was reproduced in the notes to *Love's Labour's Lost* in his later edition of Shakespeare.

²*Ibid.*

³*The Works of Pope*, ed. Rev. Lisle Bowles, 1806, IV, 182. Note by Warburton.

⁴It is interesting to note that as late as 1736 appeared *Celestina; or, The History of Hyempsal, King of Numidia*. That it was published anonymously is also significant. E. A. Baker calls it "a belated attempt to resuscitate an effete style." *The History of the English Novel*, 1929, III, 33.

⁵No. 37, April 12, 1711.

dead, and in spite of Clara Reeve's remark that "the book came thirty or forty years too late,"¹ Mrs. Lennox's novel is indirectly the best evidence that even about the year 1752, there were people left to whom *Cleopatra*, *Cassandra*, *Clelia*, and *The Grand Cyrus* (a few books from the heroine Arabella's library), were still a source of great interest.² Even the sedate Dr. Johnson was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry in his childhood. The person who said that only a fool read a book "through," forgot his own maxim and read, only a few months before *The Castle of Otranto* came out, the folios of the Spanish romance, *Felixmarte of Hircania*, from cover to cover.³ And Walpole himself, as we shall see, had a most decided predilection for these "voluminous extravagancies."⁴ Therefore, it is possible in a sense, to perceive an unbroken chain in the continuity of prose romance. Tales of chivalry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were no doubt almost unknown; but the so-called "sentimental-pastoral-heroical" romances of the seventeenth were by no means wholly extinct. They dragged on at least a country-house existence, if not more,⁵ where the unsophisticated still shed tears over the pages of *The Grand Cyrus* and *Clelia*. The stream continued to trickle unobtrusively. What makes the hiatus seem so marked—and at first sight *The Castle of Otranto* does seem a bolt from the blue—is the sudden appearance of a brilliant constellation of realistic novelists, with life for the basic texture of their works. And it is this also which makes one wonder what prompted Walpole to write his Gothic story, when there were scarcely any signs in fiction of a revival of romance⁶; when the times, popular taste and critical opinion, were all against the attempt, especially when the popularity of Richardson and Fielding was still growing and the moment

¹Clara Reeve: *The Progress of Romance*, 1785, II, 6.

²Mrs. Lennox: *The Female Quixote*, 1752, I, 70.

³*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. Burbeck Hill, 1887, I, 49.

⁴*The Works of Pope*, ed. Rev. Lisle Bowles, 1806, IV, 183. Note on Romances by Warburton.

⁵Burke confessed in the House of Commons that a very favourite study of his childhood had been the old romances, *Palmerin in England*, and *Don Beliarus of Greece*. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. Burbeck Hill, 1887, I, 49, Note.

⁶Leland's *Longsword* (1762) must be mentioned as an exception.

or a reaction was not yet ripe. For a possible explanation of this question, one has to turn to Walpole himself.

II

The chameleon personality of Walpole presents a most baffling problem to those who try to reduce it to a logical, close-reasoned analysis of character. He admired Gray, but wrote of his Runic poems, "who can care through what horrors a Runic savage arrived at all the joys and glories they could conceive, the supreme felicity of boozing ale out of the skull of an enemy in Odin's hall";¹ he disliked Thomson and Akenside, stated that "Pope and poetry are dead,"² but had a real appreciation for *The Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, for old ballads, and for Milton; he compared Dante with "a Methodist parson in Bedlam,"³ pronounced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "forty times more nonsensical than the worst translation of any Italian opera-books,"⁴ but himself wrote *The Castle of Otranto*. His "passionometer" was susceptible of sudden changes. It was with some justification that he called himself Ariel. This capricious side of his nature has led some, at the head of whom stands Macaulay, to an absolute denial of character in Walpole. "His affectation is so habitual and so universal that it can hardly be called affectation. The affectation is the essence of the man."⁵ But easy summaries and clear-cut analyses of character are a snare. There is one factor in human nature which must always be reckoned with—namely, the feasibility of contradiction. The estimate by Macaulay is unjust. A germ of truth in it there may be, but it is truth exaggerated to the point of contortion. In spite of all the contradictions in Walpole's opinions, it is possible for us to notice one or two predominant traits in his character. Strawberry Hill was no mere superficial affectation, though affectation may have been its beginning. It came to be the main, all-absorbing

¹*Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee, VII, 175

²*Ibid.*, III, 181

³*Ibid.*, XII, 274.

⁴*Ibid.*, III, 288

⁵*Horace Walpole*, by Macaulay. Traveller's Library, 1852, Vol. XIX, p. 19. First published October, 1833.

interest of his life. Other hobbies may have come and gone, but the Gothic castle, and all it represented, went on for ever! The creator of Strawberry reveals to us a side of his personality in which one perceives a certain disgust with his surroundings, a desire for imaginative expansion and release, a light and airy fancy.

This trait is perceptible even in the activities of his boyish days. Writing to George Montagu from Cambridge in 1736, he said,

"Dear George, were not the playing fields at Eton food for all manner of flights? No old maid's gown, though it had been tormented into all the fashions from King James to King George, ever underwent so many transformations as those poor plains have in my idea. At first I was contented with tending a visionary flock, and sighing some pastoral name to the echo of the cascade under the bridge. How happy I should have been to have had a kingdom only for the pleasure of being driven from it, and living disguised in an humble vale! As I got further into Virgil and Clelia, I found myself transported from Arcadia to the garden of Italy; and saw Windsor Castle in no other view than the *Capitoli immobile saxum*."¹

Yes; the romances of Scudéry were devoured by the four members of the "Quadruple Alliance"—Horace Walpole, Thomas Gray, Thomas Ashton, and Richard West—at Eton. Walpole's love for them long outlived his school days and had a lasting effect on him. Six years later he again refers to Scudéry's works. This time his angle of vision appears unromantic, his attitude satirical.

"At last the mighty monarch does not go to Flanders, after making the greatest preparations that ever were made but by Harry the Eighth and the authors of the Grand Cyrus and the illustrious Bassa: you may judge by the quantity of napkins, which were to the amount of nine hundred dozen—indeed, I don't recollect that ancient heroes were ever so provident of necessities, or thought how they were to wash their hands and face after a victory."²

But this is only a letter-writer's pose and not a real expression of feelings. It is a mannerism, one phase of Walpole's epistolary technique. A professional wit's letters are not his confessional. The sneaking regard which he had for

¹*Letters*, I, 12.

²*Ibid.*, I, 288.

romances made these absurdities also a source of delight to him as compared with the sober rationalism of his surroundings.

Four years later he wrote to Conway, "now, if one has a mind to be read, one must write metaphysical poems in blank verse, which, though I own to be still easier, have not half the imagination of romances, and are dull without any agreeable absurdity. Only think of the gravity of this wise age, that have exploded *Cleopatra* and *Pharamond*, and approve *The Pleasures of the Imagination*. . . ."¹

It is this side of Walpole which led him to the past, to archæological studies and resulted in the development of his medieval interests. Failure in politics, his father's downfall, the influence of Gray and Cole, strengthened the tendency, and as Oswald Doughty in his admirable essay on Walpole expresses it, he was "a spiritual exile in his native land."² He was not in sympathy with his times. His opinions on contemporary novelists are particularly interesting from our point of view. Richardson's work he characterizes as "those deplorably tedious lamentations, *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, which are pictures of high life as conceived by a bookseller, and romances as they would be spiritualized by a Methodist teacher."³ "Fielding," he said, "had as much humour, perhaps, as Addison; but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting."⁴ *Tristram Shandy* was dubbed with the epithet "tiresome."⁵ Making allowance for his natural carping attitude, there is certainly a consistent lack of sympathy with contemporary realistic fiction. He was sensitive and fastidious. The man to whom country house existence afforded only "lamentable proofs . . . of the stupefying qualities of beef, ale, and wine" and who saw in the men there only "mountains of roast beef . . . just roughly hewn out into the outlines of human form,"⁶ was hardly likely to be pleased with the realism of Fielding and Smollett. While at Eton he had been given the sobriquet Celadon, probably, as has been suggested, after the character of that name in

¹*Letters*, II, 248.

²*The Castle of Otranto*, ed. Oswald Doughty, 1929, Introduction, p. xxi.

³*Letters*, VI, 163.

⁴*Ibid.*, XIII, 281.

⁵*Ibid.*, VII, 175.

⁶*Ibid.*, I, 372.

D'Urfé's *Astraea*, and he dreamed of becoming a swain in Arcadia.

This "fish out of water" feeling led him to concentrate on Strawberry Hill. How his ideas on the Gothic altered and his love for it developed is interesting. In 1738, he wrote a poem "In Memory of King Henry the Sixth," and talking of Eton College Chapel, he regrets that

"Art and Palladio had not reach'd the land
Nor methodis'd the Vandal builder's hand."

Even up to 1743, when he wrote his *Ædes Walpolianae*, he criticized the colouring of the Florentine school of painting as "gawdy and gothic."¹ But by 1750, he boldly announced, "I am going to build a little Gothic Castle at Strawberry Hill."² A new chapter in the life of Walpole begins. The fourteen years that were to elapse before the inception of *The Castle of Otranto* are full of architectural activities and enthusiasm about the miniature castle. "One has a satisfaction in imprinting the gloomth of abbeys and cathedrals on one's house . . .", he wrote to Horace Mann in 1753.³ In reply to a letter from George Montagu, he said, "I thank you too for the offer of your Roman correspondences, but you know I have done with virtù and deal only with the Goths and Vandals."⁴ The romantic ideals of a literary mind are being realized in actual life at Strawberry. George Montagu is again the recipient of letters which show that his mind about this time was full of buried manuscripts, of valuable documents concealed behind Gothic wainscot.⁵ With a feeling of pride he speaks of himself as the "seneschals of those castles";⁶ and to Conway in 1755 he wrote, "I give myself the airs, in my nutshell, of an old baron, and am tempted almost to say with an old Earl of Norfolk . . .,

"When I am in my castle of Bungey,
Situat upon the river Waveney,
I ne care for the King of Cockney."⁷

By 1762, Walpole's pretensions about Strawberry have increased and he invites Thomas Warton to pay a visit.

¹*Ædes Walpolianae*, 2nd Ed., 1752. Introduction, xxv.

²*Letters*, II, 423.

³*Ibid.*, III, 107-8

⁴*Ibid.*, III, 151

⁵*Ibid.*, III, 255.

⁶*Ibid.*, III, 140.

⁷*Ibid.*, III, 346.

"You would see some attempts at Gothic, some miniatures of scenes which I am pleased to find you love.—Cloisters, screens, round towers, and a printing house, all indèed of baby dimensions, would put you a little in mind of the age of Caxton and Wynken. You might play at fancying yourself in a castle described by Spenser."¹

The transition to the publication in 1764 of *The Castle of Otranto*², a Gothic story, supposed to have been printed in black letter, found in the library of an ancient family and dealing with the darkest ages of Christianity, with miracles, visions, necromancy, and dreams, is perfectly natural. To quote an oft-quoted passage once more, Walpole wrote to Cole in March 1765,

"Shall I even confess to you, what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which, all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. . . ."³

Herein lies the explanation of the problem which presented itself in the last section; namely, the publication in 1764 of a medieval romance when the popularity of Richardson and Fielding was still on the increase. *The Castle of Otranto* was not a conscious reaction against realistic fiction; it was the product of a side-track of romanticism—the Gothic building of Walpole.

All the motives which Walpole was inclined to read into his attempt after the rapid sale of the first five hundred copies are after-thoughts. The claims are varied and inconsistent. He wrote to Dr. Warton, in March 1765, saying that his "trifle," "to say the truth, was begun without any plan at all."⁴ A week earlier he had described the origin of the romance in the letter to Cole. Only two days after writing to Dr. Warton, he said to Elie de Beaumont, "Forgive

¹*Letters*, V, 237-38

²First advertised in *The London Chronicle*, XVI, 606 December 22-25, 1764.

³*Letters*, VI, 195.

⁴*Ibid.*, VI, 198.

me if I add that Richardson had, to me at least, made that kind of writing insupportable. I thought the *nodus* was become *dignus vindice*, and that a god, at least a ghosc, was absolutely necessary to frighten us out of too much senses. When I had so wicked a design, no wonder if the execution was answerable."¹ Such statements must obviously be taken with a grain of salt. The contradiction is too glaring. The very diffidence of Walpole in publishing his story as a translation by "William Marshal, Gent., from the Original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto," shows that his was not the courage of the enthusiast or reformer; rather the timidity of a child who is half-ashamed of having given publicity to a wild dream. Walpole's medieval activities, especially architectural activities, are the real parent of his goblin tale. In this sense, Walpole's story does not fall in the direct line of development. Idyllic yearnings, love for heroic romances, Shakespeare, Spenser, provided a receptive soil; dissatisfaction with contemporary novels may have strengthened the native receptivity; but the vital spark came from Strawberry. *The Castle of Otranto* is not a direct revolt; it is an interesting literary document, an unconscious forecast of things to come. The influences round the child's nativity have left their mark indelibly on the physique, structure, and characteristics of their offspring.

III

The self-consciousness of Walpole, his remarkable loquacity, combined with his wide and various circle of correspondents, have left us a quantity of critical opinion on *The Castle of Otranto* from his own pen. But out of all these remarks those contained in the short introduction to the first anonymous edition are the most interesting and also perhaps the most reliable. Here he is not puffed up with success, propounding inflated theories, or manipulating motives to place his tale in the best light possible. A writer criticizing his work, or giving a justification of it, behind the mask of anonymity and with the fear of the public still before him is

¹*Letters*, VI, 201.

more likely to speak dispassionately and modestly and to the point than after the work has met with some success. This preface, apart from the interest of the fictitious manuscript device which was to gain wide currency later and which seems to have been suggested by a work of Samuel Croxall,¹ is remarkable for three statements.

1. Apologizing for the "air of the miraculous" in his novel, Walpole lays stress on the desire for historical colouring as his justification. An author who omits all mention of the supernatural, he says, would not be faithful to the *manners* of the Middle Ages.

2. He points out specifically that Terror is the author's principal engine.

3. He draws the reader's attention to the structure of his story. "There is no bombast, no similes, flowers, digressions, or unnecessary descriptions. . . . Never is the reader's attention relaxed. The rules of the drama are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece."

These points, combined with the sentence in the Preface to the Second Edition, that "it was an attempt to blend the two kinds of Romance, the ancient [by ancient romance Walpole means the heroic romances] and the modern,"² sum up the general principles on which the tale is built.

The actual plot of *The Castle of Otranto* is simple.³ Manfred, Prince of Otranto, has two children—Conrad and Matilda. Isabella, the daughter of Marquis Frederic of Vicenza who is reputed to be dead, is betrothed to Manfred's son Conrad. On the day the marriage is to take place, and

¹In 1721 was published a work entitled "*The Secret History of Pythagoras* Part I. Translated from the original copy lately found at Otranto in Italy By J W M D." An edition of this work came out as late as 1751. In spite of Walpole's statement that "it was not till the story was finished that he looked up into the map of the Kingdom of Naples for a well-sounding name and that of Otranto was sonorous," the similarity between the title of Walpole's story and his manuscript device and that of Samuel Croxall is so remarkable that it seems not at all unlikely that Walpole knew the book or had, at least, heard of it.

²*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., 1765, Preface, p. vi.

³Alice M. Killen in her *Le Roman Terrifiant ou Roman Noir* (1915), p. 15, note ii, has pointed out the similarity between the Manfred of *The Castle of Otranto* and the Manfred of history. The points of resemblance have been summarized in Oswald Doughty's edition of the novel. This is added testimony in favour of the suggestion previously made that Walpole did not just look into the map of Italy for a high-sounding name after the story had been written out, but that he had some foreknowledge of Otranto and its history. (*Vide*, note 1.)

all arrangements are complete, a servant rushes into the chapel, dumb with terror. A mighty helmet, a hundred times more large than any worn by human being, has suddenly crashed into the courtyard and killed Conrad. An ancient prophecy was said to have pronounced that "the Castle and Lordship of *Otranto* should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it";¹ and the portent so engrosses Manfred's attention that he does not seem to be much affected by the death itself. Meanwhile a peasant named Theodore comments on the resemblance between the helmet in the courtyard and the helmet on the head of the statue of Alfonso the Good, a former ruler of the principality of Otranto, in the neighbouring church of St. Nicholas. This comment inexplicably drives Manfred into a rage. He suddenly orders, "Take care of the lady *Isabella*."² Without noticing his wife, Hippolita, or Matilda, his daughter, he sends for Isabella and offers himself in marriage in place of the dead Conrad. "My fate depends on having sons," he says.³ Isabella, disgusted and terror-struck, makes her escape from the castle and takes refuge in the convent near by. Manfred suspects the peasant Theodore of having helped her in her escape. Meanwhile Father Jerome of St. Nicholas's Monastery has been informed by Isabella of Manfred's designs and his desire to get a divorce from Hippolita. Disapproving of the proposal, and intending to gain time, Father Jerome also throws an indirect hint of an understanding between Theodore and Isabella. Enraged with jealousy, Manfred orders the execution of Theodore. At this critical moment, as the youth kneels down to say his last prayers, his shirt slips down and Father Jerome cries "Gracious heaven! what do I see! it is my child! my *Theodore*";⁴ the mark of a bloody arrow below the shoulder had caused this exclamation. Father Jerome turns out to be the Count of Falcantara.

While this is passing, a trumpet suddenly sounds; the sable plumes of the big helmet nod; and a herald from "the knight of the gigantic sabre" delivers a message to Manfred,

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., 1765, p. 3.

²*Ibid.*, p. 18

³*Ibid.*, p. 6

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 83.

calling on him to deliver Isabella and also the principality of Otranto to its proper owner, Lord Frederic, the nearest of blood, to the last rightful lord Alfonso. Manfred tries to settle matters amicably by suggesting a marriage between Isabella and himself. While the negotiations with the knights are on foot, the news of Isabella's flight from the convent also is brought. The knight of the gigantic sabre at this instance of Manfred's dissimulation breaks away from Manfred and rushes out in search of Isabella. Meantime, Matilda, who felt strongly attracted towards Theodore and who had fallen in love with him because of the resemblance he bore to the picture of Alfonso in the gallery, releases him from captivity in the black tower. He meets Isabella fleeing from the convent. When the knight, also in quest of Isabella, approaches the place of their retreat, Theodore mistakes him for one of Manfred's emissaries in pursuit. A fight ensues. The knight is wounded; and struggling for utterance, he says to Isabella, "Then thou—then thou—seest—thy father——."¹ He was Lord Frederic in person released from infidel durance in the Holy Land, and returned to save Isabella, who, he had been told in a dream, was in danger.

Manfred tries to secure his position by a double marriage—between Isabella and himself, and Frederic and Matilda. While this plan is hatching and Hippolita is on the point of consenting to a divorce, three drops of blood fall from the nose of Alfonso's statue. "Behold!" says Father Jerome, "mark this miraculous indication that the blood of *Alfonso* will never mix with that of *Manfred*!"² The story aided by supernatural agency moves swiftly on after this. Frederic, whose infatuation for Matilda made him anxious for a marriage with her, seeks Hippolita to find out if she would really consent to a divorce from Manfred. But the fleshless skeleton of the hermit whom he had seen in the Holy Land suddenly admonishes him to "Forget Matilda!" The strange stories about rattling armour and giant arms and legs which the domestics report to have seen also influence him to alter his mind. An evil destiny seems to hang over the

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed, 1765, p. 127.

²*Ibid.*, pp 164-5.

house of Manfred. The sight of Matilda had made Theodore drink deeply of the passion of love and he goes to the tomb of Alfonso to say his prayers; accidentally Matilda too comes there to intercede for her father and herself. Manfred, whose jealousy had induced him to have the movements of Théodore watched, receives a message that at that moment some lady from the castle is in conference with Theodore in the Church of St. Nicholas. On his arrival at the spot, the first words which greet his ears are, "Does it alas! depend on me? *Manfred* will never permit our union."¹ Thinking it was Isabella, he stabs his own daughter. Saint Nicholas had promised Ricardo, an ancestor of Manfred's who had murdered Alfonso, that his posterity should reign in Otranto, until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle and as long as issue male from Ricardo's loins should remain to enjoy it. Conrad was already dead. As soon as Matilda breathes her last, a clap of thunder and the clank of more than mortal armour is heard. The prophecy is about to be fulfilled. With Theodore's appearance in the courtyard the walls of the castle fall; the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appears in the centre of the ruins. "Behold in *Theodore* the true heir of *Alfonso*!"² Saying this the vision vanishes in a blaze of glory. It appears that Alfonso, while shipwrecked on an island, had married and left his wife pregnant. Having died before he could acknowledge her, the child of their marriage grew up in obscurity and ultimately married Count Falcunora. Theodore was the fruit of that union. Hippolita and Manfred retire to a convent; and Theodore finally marries Isabella, persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul after Matilda's death. Thus are the lines engraven on the gigantic sabre which Lord Frederic had dug up in Holy Land also fulfilled.

"Where e'er a casque that suits this sword is found,
With perils is thy daughter compass'd round.
Alfonso's blood alone can save the maid,
And quiet a long restless Prince's shade."³

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., 1765, p. 186

²*Ibid*, 1765, p. 134.

³*Ibid.*, p. 195.

The application of modern standards of criticism to *The Castle of Otranto* will, from our point of view, be out of place. In judging its historical importance, it is more relevant to consider what the novel actually represented in the eyes of its contemporaries. For us, the ideals and theories of Walpole have more significance than his achievement in their execution. Writing to Dr. Warton, Walpole said that his novel aimed at combining "the marvellous of old story with the natural of modern novels."¹ The book reveals these dual characteristics. The latter element in the novel is the method of handling character and dialogue. Manfred is a gloomy and austere tyrant; but still "not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked."² Matilda is represented as the dutiful daughter with a melancholy cast of mind, who, if she had her way, would spend her days in a convent. Isabella is of a livelier cast. Theodore, "with large black eyes, a smooth white forehead, and manly curling locks like jet,"³ is a real hero, with hero-like qualities. He is bold and noble and generous and melancholy and sighs always for others. Hippolita is a monument of patience; silent, long-suffering, pious. All this was nothing new or original. The characters are mostly stock-figures. Contrasted with these puppets of high life are the domestics in the story. Diego and Jaques and the loquacious maid Bianca have their originals, as Walpole acknowledged, in Shakespeare. The actions of the actors are intended to be within bounds of reason, and here "the natural of modern novels" comes to an end.

To give play to the resources of fancy Walpole turned to ancient romances. He had, as we have seen, a tender regard for the works of Scudéry and the Heroic school. His letters show that he also knew the *Arcadia* of Sidney. And this, if a suggestion may be made, seems to have been the source of a part of the supernatural element in *The Castle of Otranto*. The origin and the key of the whole plot in both is a prophecy of things to come. In the *Arcadia* the oracle predicts strange events, which on the surface are senseless. In

¹*Letters*, VI, 198

²*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed, p 34.

³*Ibid*, pp. 49-50.

The Castle of Otranto similarly the prophecy is mysterious. The story of the *Arcadia* is the gradual, unrelenting fulfilment of all the predictions of the Oracle, in spite of King Basilius's efforts to prevent their materialization. *The Castle of Otranto* also is based on Manfred's fruitless attempts to ward off his destiny and the realization of the prophecy. The giant and his leg and armour of the prophecy itself, I think, probably owe much to Count Anthony Hamilton with whose works Walpole was quite familiar. In the tale entitled "The Four Facardins," one of the adventures of Facardin of Mount Atlas is a fight with "an enormous giant," who had a very long nail on the toe of his right foot. Facardin, injured by this nail, gets infuriated and lops off the leg to whose foot the nail is attached. The giant falls. "His fall was like that of a tower and the earth trembled as he touched it."¹ Facardin's attention is diverted for some time, but when he returns he finds that the giant has disappeared and carried his leg away with him. Walpole wrote to Cole about the big hand in armour which he saw on the banister of the staircase; but while enlarging on the suggestion of the dream, he probably had recourse to Count Hamilton for the supernatural. What gives further credence to this suggestion is the similarity in the handling of the material by these two writers. The same naive simplicity is characteristic of both. It is a "supernatural" in which atmosphere and suggestion play no part. The crude machinery of the tales belongs to that ideal world of fancy in which there is no necessity for a correspondence between effect and cause, and where there is no verge to probability. Things happen in *The Castle of Otranto* and there is an end to it.

This was the nature of Walpole's debt to his environment, to contemporary fiction, to romances and Shakespeare. If, however, *The Castle of Otranto* contained nothing more than this, it would scarcely be worth considering and would certainly not have had any influence on the English novel. Thus far it is old property, ill-balanced, ill conceived. But Walpole's innovation comes in with the fire that welds

¹*Fairy Tales and Romances*, by Count Anthony Hamilton, 1849, p. 21.

these ingredients together. As Strawberry Hill was the direct inspiring force supporting Walpole's flight, it also proves the important fusing, co-ordinating factor *inside* the actual novel. His Gothic castle provides the stage as well as the setting for the story, and the statement is true in a literal sense.

With a silent chuckle up his sleeve and the air of a person telling a truth when conscious that no one is really believing him, Walpole wrote in his first preface, "Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe that the groundwork of the story is founded in truth. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design, to describe particular parts. . . . Curious persons, who have leisure to employ in such researches, may possibly discover in the Italian writers the foundation on which the author has built."¹ He was even more explicit when he said later of Strawberry that it was "a very proper habitation of, as it was the scene that inspired, the author of the *Castle of Otranto*."²

But ever since Lady Craven sent Walpole a drawing of the real castle in 1786, "curious persons who have leisure to employ in such researches" have gone further and further from what seems to have been the truth. A comparison between *The Castle of Otranto* and Strawberry Hill affords evidence amounting to proof that the stage of action in Walpole's mind while writing the story was his own house. A detailed comparison will of course be out of place here, but a few instances adduced to support the statement will not be irrelevant. The gallery, round tower, and the great cloister at Strawberry were all built before the publication of Walpole's novel and they are incorporated in the tale.

(a) The walls of the gallery in Walpole's house were lined with "chairs, settees, and long stools."³ There were also pictures on the walls. In *The Castle of Otranto* we find three separate instances corresponding to these fittings. "When they came to *Manfred*, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he started and said hastily, 'Take away that light,

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, ed. Oswald Doughty, 1929, p. lxxxi

²*A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole*, 1784, Preface, p. iii

³*Ibid.*, 1784, p. 47 and print.

and begone.' Then shutting the door impetuously, he flung himself upon a bench against the wall."¹ Later we read, "the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast."² The domestics despatched in pursuit of Isabella return frightened to Manfred and say, "So when we came into the gallery, we found nobody. We looked under every bench and stool; and still we found nobody." And Manfred asks, "Were all the pictures in their places?"³

(b) The gallery at Strawberry terminates in two staircases. Going down by the principal staircase, one reaches the great cloister. There are also wine and beer cellars here. In *The Castle of Otranto* Isabella, "continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase." "She recollected a subterraneous passage." "The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloysters."⁴

(c) In the plan of the house, going up one flight of the principal stairs, a room on the right hand called "Blue Bedchamber" is reached. Bianca says in the novel, "I was going by his Highness's order to my Lady *Isabella's* chamber: she lies in the watchet [blue]-coloured chamber, on the right-hand, one pair of stairs."⁵

It is in providing these architectural properties, and in his method of handling them, and in the themes suggested to his mind by association that Walpole struck out a new line and created something novel. He was to some extent conscious of it himself as his remarks from the first Preface already quoted indicate.

The thought of the "Gothic" brought to his mind "the dark ages" of superstition and Church domination, the days of chivalry and the Crusades. These ideas are transplanted into *The Castle of Otranto*. The air of the miraculous is introduced, and most important of all is the stress which Walpole lays on historical colouring in justification of this introduction. The period of action is supposed to be between 1095 and 1243. A realistic picture of those days is attempted.

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed, pp. 15-16.

²*Ibid*, p. 38

³*Ibid*, pp. 175-6.

⁴*Ibid*, p. 19.

⁵*Ibid*., pp. 21-22.

The postern-gate bell rings; the brazen trumpet which hangs outside the gate of the castle is sounded by people on their arrival; the herald conveys to Manfred the wishes of his lord, and in failure of compliance delivers his lord's challenge to a single combat by throwing down his warder; there is a talk of the laws of arms, of hospitality, and chivalry; Matilda waits on her mother to enjoy the freshness of the evening on the ramparts of the castle. But the episode in which Walpole exerted all his powers to create an atmosphere of the Middle Ages is the description of Lord Frederic, his knights, and their train entering the castle. Thomas Green expressing his disappointment at reading *The Castle of Otranto* adds, "Let me, however, except from all censure, and honour with all praise, the scene in which Manfred receives the mute messengers of Challenge:—it is capitally supported."¹ The further association in Walpole's mind of Gothic architecture with Popery led him to the inclusion of Father Jerome, the monastery, church, and convent of St. Nicholas, and the hermit in the Holy Land.

Turning to the use Walpole made of the machinery suggested by his own house—by the gallery lined with pictures, by the cloisters and underground cellars, by "a small gloomy hall paved with hexagon tiles"²—we notice the infusion and creation of an atmosphere of terror and romance in the story. Walpole had used the phrase "gloomth of abbeys and cathedrals" in one of his letters.³ It is this element which is introduced into *The Castle of Otranto*. An "awful silence" reigns in the subterranean regions. "Gliding softly between the isles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows," Manfred steals forward.⁴ Sitting in the gallery Manfred also sees the plumes of the fatal helmet waving backwards and forwards and soon after the portrait of his grandfather utters a deep sigh and quits the panel. The flight of Isabella from the hateful advances of Manfred epitomizes in one episode most of this eerie atmosphere. She suddenly recollects a subter-

¹Thomas Green *Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of Literature*, 1810, p. 23.

²*Description*, 1784, p. 3

³*Letters*, III, 151

⁴*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed, p. 186.

ranean passage which leads from the vaults of the castle to the Church of St. Nicholas; she takes up a lamp and passes through several intricate cloisters hollowed in the lower part of the castle; her heart trembles with fear of pursuit; blasts of wind shake the doors which grate on rusty hinges; every murmur strikes her with terror; footsteps are heard; her blood curdles; the lamp goes out; luckily "a clouded ray of moonshine" comes to her aid; at last, just as Manfred's voice is heard close at hand, the trap door with a secret spring leads her to safety. The bricks and mortar of Strawberry are made to undergo a transformation by imaginative alchemy. They have been converted into means of evoking fear. If the experiment is only a very partial success it is not because there is something wrong in the design; it is because the alchemist has not the necessary imagination to lead him to success.

Terror, Walpole had said, was the author's principal engine. He tried to create it by the use of the supernatural, by nocturnal flights through subterranean regions and by "Gothic" atmosphere. Further analysis of this leads us to a consideration of Walpole's third point in the first preface—namely, his dramatic technique. The basic principle of construction in *The Castle of Otranto* is suspense. The story is divided into five chapters like the five acts of a tragedy and the time of action is three days. An attempt is made to keep the reader perpetually on the rack and the complications of the plot are not resolved till the very end. Apart from the general scheme, suspense is created in minor incidents and scenes also, and various tricks of technique are employed to achieve this heightening of curiosity, the tension of nerves. Matilda and Bianca are talking in the night over the extraordinary events of the day. Bianca, with characteristic garrulity is chattering on, "... if my Lady, your mother, who knows that a bad husband is better than no husband at all, did not hinder you—bless me! What noise is that! St. Nicholas forgive me!" "It is the wind," said Matilda, "whistling through the battlements in the tower above: You have heard it a thousand times."¹ Theodore is being released

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., p. 49.

from captivity by Matilda. It is a crucial moment. Suddenly, both are startled by "a deep and hollow groan." "They listened; but perceiving no farther noise, they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapours."¹ Half-finished sentences are another device used. When Frederic seeks the holy hermit in the Holy Land, he finds him dying; but the actual death does not take place till the hermit has excited curiosity by the revelation of half a secret.

Such are the general characteristics of the novel that, according to Gray, made some of the members of a sister university cry a little and feel afraid of going to bed.² It is a romance based on old materials, employing to some extent contemporary methods of characterization; it is constructed on dramatic principles of technique which few had used so far;³ the architectural and Gothic background gives a new colouring to the whole, providing a machinery, besides the supernatural, for terror and suspense and gloom. The desire to be true to medieval "costume" contributes its own share by giving the novel a more historical and scholarly turn—a factor which has led to *The Castle of Otranto* being called a historical novel without the history. From the above list of characteristics and contributions of the novel one would imagine it to be a triumph of art, a masterpiece of literature. That it most definitely is not. But the crudity of the attempt, the incongruity of its supernatural, the utter lack of suggestiveness do not in any way detract from the value of it in the history of the English novel. The story may lack artistic merit, but it contained in itself, in however unrefined and distorted a form, far-reaching ideas which were recognized as such and consciously developed by people in course of time. Walpole's words in the preface to the second edition were prophetic. The "new route" he struck out did pave "a road for men of brighter talents."

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., p. 116.

²*The Letters of Thomas Gray*, ed. D. C. Tovey, 1912, III, 55; December 30, 1764.

³*Incognita: or Love and Duty Reconcil'd* (1692), by William Congreve, is an instance of an earlier attempt. There is a marked similarity in the prefaces on the point of dramatic technique.

CHAPTER II

THE DOMINANCE OF REALISTIC FICTION AND RISING ROMANTICISM: 1764-1777

I

THE usual conclusion from the immediate popularity of *The Castle of Otranto* has been that it was a sign of an eager desire for a new type of fiction, an indication of a longing for the strange, the mysterious, the supernatural. Yet at the very outset, one is faced with the anomalous situation that years pass by before Walpole's lead is followed or any creative work done on the same lines. It seems strange that a book that is considered to have taken Europe by storm, and thrown England into a fever of excitement should not have met with immediate imitation. The fourteen years covered by the present chapter afford only three instances of an influence of Walpole's Gothic story—*The Hermitage* (1772), *Sir Bertrand*, *A Fragment* (1773), *The Champion of Virtue* (1777)—and even out of these three, one is only a fragment of ten pages. The first possible solution of this anomaly that strikes one is the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* when realistic fiction was at its best. And an examination of the reception given to the story reveals a significant duality that strengthens this hypothesis.

The popularity of a work can be measured by two standards; either from the sale of the book or the opinions expressed thereon by contemporary writers, from its reception among readers, or its reception among critics. There is no doubt of the success of *The Castle of Otranto* on the first score. The five hundred copies of the first edition were rapidly sold out, and Walpole brought out a second edition only four months later.¹ Another year saw the appearance of

¹The first edition was advertised in *The London Chronicle* for December 22-25, 1764, and the second in the same paper for April 11-13, 1765.

a third. Still better evidence of its popularity is afforded by its publication as a serial in a slightly abridged form, in *The Universal Magazine*.¹ The editors then, as now, must have tried to insert only those pieces in their magazines which were likely to meet the taste of the average reading public. On the other hand, a hunt for contemporary commendation yields results far below one's expectations. The letters of Walpole certainly give one the impression that there was widespread enthusiasm about his story; but on a closer scrutiny a rather doubtful fact emerges that the praise was mostly confined to a limited circle of personal friends, either aristocratic or romantic, to whom copies of the book had been despatched by the author himself. Walpole sent the tale to Elie de Beaumont, the Earl of Hertford, George Montagu, William Cole, Thomas Warton, and William Mason. From a letter to the last we gather that Mason praised it and that Gray encouraged its publication. The effect it had on the undergraduates at Cambridge has already been cited. But so far we are within the pale of the author's acquaintance, and the applause of even the most dispassionate band of friends does not represent critical opinion. Stepping out of this circle, only two instances of praise are available—a short commendatory poem by Birch that smacks of flattery,² and a reference by Warburton in his notes to Pope's "Imitations of Horace" which, considering the doctor's views on romance, seems strange and inexplicable.³ The passage deserves to be quoted:

"... When things were at the worst, we have been lately entertained with what I venture to call, a Master piece, in the *Fable*; and of a new species likewise. The piece I mean, is, THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO. The scene is laid in *Gothic Chivalry*. Where a beautiful

¹Vol. XXXVI, pp. 202-8 and 235-42, April, 1765

²Published in *St James' Chronicle* on June 20, 1765, No. 670.

³This seems stranger still in view of the fact that Warburton had taken strong offence at a passage concerning architecture in Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*. When Garrick tried to explain on Walpole's behalf that the reference was not to him but to the Phoenicians, Warburton replied, "The Phoenicians! No, no. He alludes to my note in the edition of Pope, in which I have spoken of Gothic architecture, I have exhausted the subject." cf. A. W. Evans, *Warburton and the Warburtonians*, 1932, p. 232. Is it not likely that an explanation did finally take place and, realizing that he had been misled by his violence, Warburton thought he would atone for it by praising *The Castle of Otranto*?

imagination, supported by strength of judgment, has enabled the author to go beyond his subject, and effect the full purpose of the *Ancient Tragedy*; that is, *to purge the passions by pity and terror*, in colouring as great and harmonious as in any of the best dramatic Writers"¹

Turning to the reviews which were fairly representative of the general attitude of the age and which received the high praise of Dr. Johnson for their impartiality, we find that Walpole's tale was on the whole handled none too kindly. The remarks of *The Critical* on the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto* are quite unequivocal. Criticizing "this *very curious* performance," the reviewer says, "The publication of any work, at this time, in England composed of such rotten materials, is a phenomenon we cannot account for." The enormous helmet, walking pictures that sigh and heave their breast, prove too much for the critic and he continues, "We shall not affront our readers' understanding so much as to describe the . . . monstrosities of this story; but, excepting those absurdities, the characters are well marked, and the narrative kept up with surprising spirit and propriety. The catastrophe is most wretched."² When the second edition appeared and the reviewer discovered that the story which he had criticized was from the pen of no less a person than Horace Walpole, he unbends a little, expresses his high opinion of the "writer's acquaintance with whatever relates to his subject," but ends finally by criticizing the blending of "humour and clumsy jests with dignity and solemnity."³ Open hostility disappears but only to give place to an armed neutrality.

The first notice in *The Monthly* is extremely favourable as compared with that of *The Critical*. The reviewer obviously seems to have enjoyed reading *The Castle of Otranto*, though he is half ashamed to confess it. "Those who can digest the absurdities of Gothic fiction, and bear with the machinery of ghosts and goblins, may hope, at least, for considerable entertainment from the performance before us." To refer the reader to the book, he says, will be "to recommend him

¹*The Works of Pope*, ed. Rev. Lisle Bowles, 1806, IV, 184.

²*The Critical Review*, January, 1765, XIX, 50.

³*Ibid.*, June 1765, XIX, 469

to an assemblage of beautiful pictures;"¹ and the only fault that he has to find with the story is in the uselessness of its moral! But when the authorship was acknowledged, the somersault taken by *The Monthly* after a lapse of only three months, is almost incredible though instructive.

"When this book was published as a translation from an old Italian romance, we had the pleasure of distinguishing in it the marks of genius, and many beautiful characteristic paintings. . . . While we considered it such, we could easily excuse its preposterous phenomena, and consider them as sacrifices to a gross and unenlightened age. But when, as in this edition, the Castle of Otranto is declared to be a modern performance, that indulgence we afforded to the foibles of a supposed antiquity, we can by no means extend to the singularity of a false taste in a cultivated period of learning. It is, indeed, more than strange, that an author, of a refined and polished genius, should be an advocate for re-establishing the barbarous superstitions of Gothic devilism!"²

We see, thus, that *The Castle of Otranto* received a double-faced reception. It made a hit with the public, there is no doubt but side by side with the rapid sale of the book, the attitude, of the Reviews must be placed in the opposite scale. The novel met with decided disapprobation from the critics. And the popularity of the book need not necessarily be taken as indicative of an eager desire for a new type of fiction. The passion for reading romances had never died out. In an age in which Dr. Johnson read folios of Spanish romances with intense enjoyment, the phenomenon is explicable on natural grounds. A contradiction between precept and action, not only in individuals (as in the case of *The Monthly* reviewer who experienced a sudden rational awakening from the quiet sleep of silent enjoyment), but among people in general, is bound to arise in a period in which Reason is supreme, and especially if Reason ignores something instinctive and deep-rooted. On the other hand, the disapproval of the critics is an important consideration at a time when literary production is regulated by rules. While laws cannot prevent men's enjoyment—secret, half-ashamed enjoyment—of even an unfavoured form, they certainly are

¹*The Monthly Review*, February, 1765, XXXII, 97-99.

²May, 1765, XXXII, 394

a positive setback on the function of creative energy in that particular direction. And this, as we shall see, proved to be one of the most important forces working against the immediate imitation of *The Castle of Otranto*. Walpole's story had come a little too early.

To go into any detail of the general characteristics of the age would be a mere repetition of what has oft been thought and ever so well expressed. Stress will therefore be laid only on the attitude and theory of the so-called Augustans with regard to fiction, especially as represented in periodical criticism, a factor which is cognate with the matter in hand, and has not yet received much attention from the historians of the novel.

Criticism is only the application to individual instances of the recognized and widespread ideals of a time, and the periodical critiques indirectly reveal the mental attitude of the age. To start with, the fact emerges that fiction as a genre was regarded as quite unworthy of attention. *The Literary Journal* in a review of *Amelia* states, "Romances and Novels, in general, have no great Right to be mentioned in Literary Journals."¹ Even *The Monthly Review* expresses more or less the same contempt. "Novels, tales, romances" are classed as "monsters of the imagination."² As late as 1794, Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield, wrote to C. Smith, Esq., of Christ Church, Oxford, "I read not, neither doubtless do you, the Novel trash of the day. Hours are too precious for such frivolous waste. . . ."(!)"³

If any toleration is extended to Novels and any merit allowed them, it is because of the faint possibility of teaching morality through that medium. *The Monthly* writes,

"Compositions of this kind, nevertheless, when conducted by a Writer of fine talents and elegant taste, may be rendered as beneficial as delectable. . . . Very few are disposed to relish the dry precepts of morality, or to connect a lengthened chain of reasoning; the majority must be entertained with novelty, humoured with fiction, and, as it were, cheated into instruction."⁴

These were not only the expectations of the critics, but

¹January and February, 1752, VI, 175.

³*Letters of Anna Seward*, Edin., 1811, III, 389.

²March, 1751, IV, 355.

⁴June 1761, XXIV, 415.

even authors themselves were anxious to fashion works according to this plan, and make them intentionally dull.

In 1770, the Advertisement to *The History of Charles Wentworth, Esq.*, runs, "Novels that merely entertain, merit no encouragement, because they divert the mind from more useful objects; to make them a vehicle of instruction under the mask of amusement it is necessary that they be not *too interesting*: wherever curiosity is greatly excited the mind becomes impatient to know the final event, and every moral or instructive reflection that may be interposed, suspends the gratification of its curiosity, and is on that account either read with disgust, or entirely past over."¹

In 1779, appeared a novel entitled, *The Wedding Ring; or the History of Miss Sidney*, and its chief recommendation is supposed to be that it inculcates the lesson of "perfect reliance on the SUPREME BEING in every distress and danger."² No wonder that exception was taken to the moral of *The Castle of Otranto*!

To what strange aberrations this passion for morality could lead critics becomes manifest from a review of *The Old English Baron* in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, a passage which would make Coleridge turn in his grave.

"By keeping more 'within the verge of probability,' the author has endeavoured to preserve the effect, and, at the same time, to avoid what she deems the only fault in *Otranto*, viz. 'such a degree of the marvellous as excites laughter.' But, on the other hand, if this effect be not in some degree excited, or, at least, if the circumstances be not self-evidently absurd, some weak minds, perhaps, might be induced to think them true or possible, and thereby be led into superstition."³

If this was the attitude towards novels and their purpose, the little theory of fiction that there is presents us with a counterpart to the theory of poetry in the time of Pope. Reason becomes the criterion of literary merit and Reason is also made the lode-star for the novelist. "Follow Nature" is here, as elsewhere, the shibboleth, and representation of "Nature" means truth to the concrete, visible, hard facts of methodized life.

¹Quoted from *The Critical*, XXIX, 358.

²*The Critical*, XLVII, 477.

³1778, XLVIII, 324

In a review of *Almorán and Hamet*, *The Monthly* writes, "But, though Romance¹ is, in fact, nothing more than a poetical fiction, in the habit of prose, yet, it ought never to exceed the bounds of probability. The Writer may adorn the Probable, however, with every incident to make it agreeable, and to charm and surprise the Reader. We must copy Nature, it is true; but Nature in the most perfect and elegant form in which conception can paint her."²

The Critical echoes the same idea four years later in a review of *Chrysal: or, the Adventures of a Guinea*. "In reviewing the two first volumes of this work we hinted that the author writ too much from reflexion, and too little from nature. . . . His description of the conduct and sentiments of two noble brothers, the one a soldier, the other a seaman, proves that since our review . . . this author has beheld nature reflected by a true mirror."³

As an exposition of what "Nature" means, and as a summing up of the whole attitude, one more instance from the review of *Juliet Grenville: or the History of the Human Heart* in *The Critical* in 1773, may be added.

"No species of literature affords more useful instruction than that which leads to the knowledge of human characters through the intricate mazes of the heart. It is by such representations, when faithfully portrayed, that we are taught the influence of the passions in the various situations of life, that we behold the seeds of vice and virtue germinating in their most latent recesses, and improve in that essential lesson of philosophy, to know not only others but ourselves. Utility, however, though the principal, is not the sole consequence derived from writings of this sort. For if they be the work of a masterly hand, of a hand that is guided by a regular and lively fancy combined with just reflection, and accomplished in the art of elegant composition, they present us with the most agreeable entertainment that the mind can receive."⁴

¹"Romance" and "Novel" were easily interchangeable words about the middle of the century. It was not till scholars had revived an interest in romances, and had stressed the word "romance" in contra-distinction to the word "novel" that a differentiation between them gained any consistency of usage. It may be mentioned that in indexing its contents, *The Critical* starts dividing works of fiction under the heads Romances and Novels for the first time in 1794.

²June, 1761, XXIV, 415

³XX, 120-1

⁴XXXVI, 443-4.

As long as these were the predominant ideals in fiction, romances, medieval or those of the seventeenth century, naturally called upon themselves the opprobrium and contempt of the critics. A *regular* and lively fancy, just reflection, elegant composition, intricate mazes of the heart faithfully portrayed—nothing could be further from the ideal world of romance. Its airy bubbles burst when pricked by the finger of cold common sense, or concrete reality. The supernatural degenerates into superstition; flights of fancy into regions unknown are reduced to “preposterous phenomena”; simplicity of faith and idealism becomes “a strange jumble of nonsense and religion,”¹ or “the barbarous superstitions of Gothic devilism!”² And morality, that fetish of the age, makes critics ask, “What conclusion can be drawn from hence [i.e., from *The Castle of Otranto*], but that oracles, divinations, and prophecies, should be believed, and must always be fulfilled? Such notions can only tend to enslave the mind, and bring us back to the long exploded errors of ignorance and barbarism.”³ Critical opinion was thus definitely against Walpole, and must have had a most damping effect on his enthusiasts. Walpole’s inspiration came from his Gothic castle; love of “Kudos,” a desire to be unique, spurred him on; his social status and eccentricity gave him courage. But no such motives operated in the case of average people who were penning novels to earn a living, and who were carrying on a crusade against vice. *The Castle of Otranto* was certainly popular when it came, and that by itself might have been a bait for authors; but simultaneously with its appearance there was another type of fiction which was more popular still—a type, that had the approbation not only of the public, but also of the critics. *The Castle of Otranto* appeared when realistic fiction was master of the field. Production was keeping pace with theory, and the novel market long after the publication of Walpole’s tale absolutely swarms with imitations of Richardson, Fielding,

¹*The Life and Exploits of the ingenious gentleman Don Quixote*, Tr. Charles Jarvis, 2nd Ed., 1749. Warburton’s Supplement, p. a6.

²*The Monthly*, XXXII, 394.

³*The Critical*, December, 1781, LII, 463. From the review of *The Count of Narbonne*, a tragedy by Robert Jephson, based on *The Castle of Otranto*

Smollett and Sterne, particularly the first two. A glance at the titles of novels reviewed in *The Critical* (the year 1770 may be taken as a convenient one for illustration) is illuminating.

The Placid Man: or the History of Sir Charles Bevil.

The Fruitless Repentance, or the History of Miss Kitty Le Fever.

The Maid of Quality; or the History of Lady Lucy Layton.

The History of Charles Wentworth, Esq., in a Series of Letters.

The History of Sir Charles Dormer and Miss Harriet Villers.

The Prediction; or the History of Miss Lucy Maxwell.

The Undutiful Daughter; or the History of Miss Goodwin.

The Fool of Quality; or the History of Henry Earl of Moreland.

The Old Maid, or History of Miss Ravensworth. In a series of letters.

The History of Miss Harriot Montague.

The Prince of Salerno. (On which the critic contemptuously comments that "the author seems to have heated his brain from the perusal of old Italian romances.")

The Portrait of human life.

The Fortunate Blue-Coat Boy.

The Life, Adventures, and Amours of Sir R—— P——.

Letters between an English Lady, and her friend at Paris; in which are contained the Memoirs of Mrs. Williams.

Constantia, or The Distressed Friend.

Theodora, a Novel. (One might be led to suspect this to be a romance, but the reviewer informs us that the groundwork of the novel had appeared lately in most newspapers—a piece of society scandal probably!)

The Unhappy Wife; A Series of Letters.

The Happy Discovery. (In the style of Richardson.)

The Younger Sister.

Genuine Memoirs of Miss Faulkner.

Memoirs of Miss Arabella Bolton.

Nature.

Henrietta, Countess of Osenvor; a Sentimental Novel, in a Series of Letters.

The Scotchman; or the World as it goes, a Novel.

The Life and Adventures of Mad. de la Sarre.

A Voyage through Hell, by the Invincible Man of War, Captain Single Eye, Commander; dedicated to your grandfather.

The Adventures of a Bank-Note.

Fatal Friendship: a Novel.

The Adventures of a Jesuit; interspersed with several remarkable characters and Scenes in real life.

Female Friendship, or the Innocent Sufferer, a moral Novel.

Before a revival of romantic fiction could take place in England, it was necessary that there should be an awakening of the imagination and that critical opinion with regard to romances should be changed. While fiction was adhering to the ideals of Common Sense, this is exactly what was happening during the years 1760-1780. A reaction against Rules and Restraint had already started in various directions. And in this general expansive movement of the "Renaissance of Wonder," affecting Poetry, Gardening, Painting, Architecture, one phase of the new spirit was an increased interest in the past, in the Middle Ages and their literature. The enlightened age, tired of too much light, was being attracted by the soothing and alluring mystery of the Dark Ages. In approximately the period discussed in this chapter (the boundaries may for convenience be slightly extended) there was the rise of a number of scholars who by their work in different directions did much to remove the stigma from romance. The interest in the beginning is perhaps only a scholarly interest, more intellectual than emotional. The writers are not all conscious protagonists. But by giving it the sanction of authority the very names of the scholars helped to reinstate romance in the "dogmatic formularies of the ruling class," and raise it to a plane of respectability. The transition was gradual; and at least mention ought here to be made of some of the works which helped to bring about this change.

In his *Observations on the Faerie Queene* (1754) Thomas Warton made indirectly a strong plea for chivalry and chivalric romance. Quoting Warburton on "the monstrous embellishments of enchantments," he no doubt called him "an admirable judge of this matter";¹ he talked also of

¹*Observations on the Faerie Queene*, 1754, p. 43.

"Gothic ignorance and barbarity" in the very first paragraph of his book; nevertheless, by the vast reading in older literature displayed in the footnotes, by the seriousness and earnestness with which old romances are discussed, and by the insistence on the graces of the *Faerie Queene*, "because they are situated beyond the reach of art, and where the faculties of creative imagination delight us, because they are unassisted and unrestrained by deliberate judgment,"¹ Thomas Warton struck the keynote of a new movement. Two years earlier than Warton even, one comes across a refreshing and sympathetic passage in *The Adventurer*, which anticipates Clara Reeve's views by over thirty years. The writer compares *old romance* to epic poems. After talking of "the vicissitudes of passion" with which "every heart attends Ulysses in his wanderings, and Achilles to the field," he goes on, "In both these species of writing truth is apparently violated: but though the events are not always produced by probable means, yet the pleasure arising from the story is not much lessened; for fancy is still captivated with variety, and passion has scarce leisure to reflect, that she is agitated with the fate of imaginary beings, and interested in events that never happened."²

But the first conscious, sustained defence was in Hurd's remarkable *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* in 1762. "May there not be something in the Gothic Romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius, and to the ends of poetry? And may not the philosophic moderns have gone too far, in their perpetual ridicule and contempt of it?"³ Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian* which came out the same year also indirectly helped the movement in favour of the restoration of dignity to ages gone by. In the preface to the first edition he said he would not have dwelt so long on the question of the authenticity of the epic of Fingal, "were it not on account of the prejudices of the present age, against the ancient inhabitants of Britain, who are thought to have been incapable of the generous sentiments to be met with in the poems of Ossian."⁴

¹*Observations on the Faerie Queene*, p. 13.

²*The Adventurer*, November 18, 1752, Vol. I, pp. 19-24.

³Richard Hurd *Letters, etc.*, ed. Edith J. Morley, 1911, p. 81.

⁴*The Poems of Ossian*, ed. Malcolm Laing, 1805, p. lxi.

A year after *The Castle of Otranto*, Bishop Percy published his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. While so far there had been a general defence and appeal on behalf of Romance, Percy unconsciously provided a more substantial material on which to build romances. His "parcel of Old Ballads,"¹ as he stated, exhibited "the customs and opinions of remote ages."² To his *Reliques* was also prefixed "An Essay on the Ancient Minstrels," embodying much original research.

The interest was on the increase and in 1774 came out the first volume of the *History of English Poetry* by Thomas Warton, with a long dissertation "On the origin of romantic Fiction in Europe."³ The work was favourably received and by its very width and vision had a wide influence. Richard Price on the scope of Warton's book says, "The range of enquiry was to be extended . . . , beyond its obvious or perhaps its lawful limits; and the *History of English Poetry* to be made a channel for conveying information on the state of manners and customs among our feudal ancestry, the literature and arts of England, and occasionally of Europe at large."⁴ This being the range and nature of the work, it served a double purpose. It not only gave dignity to Romance, but it also dispelled some of the darkness that enveloped Feudal times.

Mrs. Susannah Dobson contributed her share by translations on the subject. In 1779, she published her *Literary History of the Troubadours . . . from the French of Mr. De Saint Pelaie*, and *The Critical* gave extensive quotations from it. Introducing the book, Mrs. Dobson said that it contained "a great and striking picture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries";⁵ remarked that "the works of the Troubadours are nevertheless of great value, as the customs and morals of

¹*Reliques*, New Edition, 1847, Preface, I, xxiv.

²*Ibid.*, Dedication, I, vi.

³As further evidence of a rise of interest in the subject, it might be mentioned that about this time a controversy on the origins of romance, and on the word itself, seems to have started. Letters were contributed on the origin of the word to the *Archæologia*, by Rev. Mr. Drake in 1774 (*Arch*, IV, 142), and Rev. Mr. Bowle (*Arch*, V, 267), in 1778. Other scholars were not backward, and Malone in his edition of *The Plays and Poems of Shakespeare* (1790), quotes Tyrwhitt's refutation of Warburton's theories on the origin of romance (Vol. II, 433-8).

⁴*History of English Poetry*, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt, 1871, I, p. 8, Price's preface.

⁵*The History of the Troubadours*, 1779, Preface, p. ix

these distant ages are, in them, more exactly copied from nature than in any other memoirs of the times. . . . The poets may be justly styled painters from life";¹ and to lend dignity to a subject which might have been considered trifling, finally adds, "Homer was in fact the historian of his own age; and even his fictions are a source of knowledge and truth."² In 1784, she translated another work of the same author under the title, *Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry*. The same year was published *A Concise History of Knighthood. Containing the Religious and Military Orders which have been instituted in Europe*, by Hugh Clark. This book, though a specialized and technical work, dealing with "collars, stars, badges and mottoes"³ of the various orders, must have provided a fund of knowledge for the novelists. Even dry details are necessary to build up the super-structure of a story, and the lists in the book of names of persons knighted in each reign seem to have been a source for the characters in the historical tales that became popular about this time. The very plates in the volumes must have been a mine of interest and information.

In this way, little by little, a subject that had been considered not worthy of attention, which had been disposed of contemptuously as "barbarous," as "abounding with the false provocative of enchantment and prodigies"⁴ suited to gratify only a vitiated and uncultivated taste; which had been denied even the possibility of any literary merit, regained, through the efforts of scholars, editors, antiquaries, some of its lost prestige. The stigma of inferiority was taken away. That these works did effect this change becomes evident from a comment of *The Monthly*, in a review of Clara Reeve's *Progress of Romance*, in 1785, a book with which we might terminate this brief sketch of the more important works on the subject. Bolstering himself up behind authorities, the reviewer wrote,

"If Hurd, Beattie,⁵ Warton, and Percy (whose names reflect the

¹*The History of the Troubadours*, 1779, p. xv.

²*Ibid.*, Preface, p. xv

³Preface, p. vii.

⁴*The Works of Pope*, ed. Rev. Lisle Bowles, 1806, IV, 182. Note by Warburton.

⁵James Beattie wrote an essay "On Fable and Romance," published in his *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, in 1783.

highest lustre on modern literature), did not regard the subject of these little volumes as unworthy of their research, no one need blush at devoting some portion of time in pursuit of the same enquiry; nor can that be deemed undeserving the notice and protection by the Public, to which the practice of a Sydney hath given sanction, and which hath received the approbation of a Milton."¹

It is worth comment that the attitude of the majority of these writers in their studies—Hurd excepted—has an air of superiority about it. They are interested in tracing the progress from barbarism to enlightenment. But even this in itself was a great step. They did away with the absolute neglect and contemptuous indifference that had been characteristic of the times. They prepared the ground in which the seed sown by *The Castle of Otranto* was to germinate. It is only when this phase coincides with the desire for change in fiction, that active production on the lines suggested by *The Castle of Otranto* starts in any considerable degree. Not till towards the end of the period 1764–1777 did the edge of novelty wear off realistic fiction, or a surfeit of sameness set in. The first indications of satiety with contemporary novels are important for us, and present a strange coincidence. In 1773, the year of *Sir Bertrand's* publication, *The Critical* said in a review of *The Fashionable Friend*, "When ancient romances were exploded, and pictures of real life were substituted in their stead, such a variety of characters and incidents presented themselves, that novel-writers easily met with materials; a wide field was opened for them to range in, and they might avoid treading in each others steps. But since almost every track is become beaten, authors are obliged to make the most of what is left them; for this reason most of our later novels are very barren of incidents, and the writers seem to aim less at diversifying their tales, than at working up a single circumstance in the most striking manner."²

The year *The Champion of Virtue* appeared, *The Critical* again reveals its disgust, this time more emphatically. "The abuse of novel writing is so great, that it has almost brought that species of entertainment into discredit. Meagre stories,

¹*The Monthly Review*, December, 1785, LXXIII, 414.

²*The Critical*, XXXVI, 235

flatly told, and drawled through many tedious volumes with no other view than a little dirty emolument, have overwhelmed us like a flood; and the manes of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett have often been cruelly tortured by their imitators."¹

To sum up, the years under consideration possess all the charm of an era of preparation—its problems and its contradictions. They show the slow evolution of opinion, the first signs of a new movement and its tentative beginnings. *The Castle of Otranto* on its appearance was very popular reading with the public. But paradoxically, the deduction from this popularity that there was an eager desire for a new type of fiction is not true to fact. The reception of *The Castle of Otranto* by the critics was not favourable and this was more representative of the ideals of the day and a more influential force in regulating fresh production, than the appreciation of the average reader. When rules regulate letters the importance of literary theory is bound to be great. Thus adverse critical opinion, which resulted on the one hand in the disgrace of romance, and on the other in the setting up of ideals detrimental to their spirit, was the first important force operating against the imitation of *The Castle of Otranto*. The second important force was the fact that when Walpole wrote his story, the school of Richardson and Fielding was all-powerful. A type which had critics on its side, which appealed to reason and which conformed to the dominating theories of the time, naturally attracted authors more than disgraced romance could. These circumstances account for the startling inconsistency between the popularity of *The Castle of Otranto* and the long lapse of time before it produced any visible impression in fiction. It was not till a band of scholars had shaken the smug superiority of the age, laid stress on imagination, and removed the blot from romance, that there was any possibility of a revival of that effete genre. Simultaneously with this development, the old order began to show signs of fatigue. The results are discussed in the next chapter. But the importance of *The Castle of Otranto* lies in having provided the rallying-point when the desire

¹*The Critical*, XLIII, 473.

for change did arrive. And as might have been expected, all the three imitators of Walpole in this period are only allied personalities stimulated by *The Castle of Otranto* because of some special idiosyncrasy in their temperament rather than by a mere desire to imitate a popular model.

II

Before proceeding to an examination of *The Hermitage*, to my knowledge the first direct descendant of Horace Walpole, a novel entitled *The Hermit* that appeared in 1769, deserves to be mentioned. The hermit, who gives the title to the story, retires to a cave in a wood, after experiencing a series of family misfortunes, but is finally recalled to society and prosperity by a happy turn in circumstances. The conduct and plot of the book shows no trace of *The Castle of Otranto*; and the "retreat," and the figure of the holy man are the only reasons for its inclusion in this survey. The hermit who, in *The Castle of Otranto*, was found dying in a cell in the deepest recesses of the wood near Joppa, almost made the character a *sine qua non* in the early Gothic novel; the present story provides probably the first instance of its use after Walpole. The vogue of this man of piety at that time is easily accounted for by his latent possibilities. Introduced with a past wrapt in mystery, leading a life of silent beatitude, succouring the distressed, and tending the sick, he proved a very fitting instrument in the hands of novelists who wished to make their work a medium of instructor. His life, as in this novel, could be a silent reproach to the vain, unprofitable bustle of life, or by its sufferings, the picture of retribution pursuing an act of indiscipline and impetuosity; it could be an example to teach patience, or an inspiration to inculcate piety. And authors and critics wanted nothing better.

The retreat itself has a "gloomy aspect,"¹ and the way to it leads through several intricate paths difficult to penetrate. A rock impedes the progress at the end of one of these passages, the entrance being concealed by a cunningly con-

¹*The Hermit, A Novel*, by a Lady, 1769, II, 11.

structed door; and flights of steps, "that were worn by time or hewn by Art"¹ lead to the bottom of the cavern. Thus, some of the properties used by Walpole are also here, though the motive of their introduction is entirely different. They are intended to create a mild air of novelty only. The desire to evoke terror or suspense is entirely absent; and the supernatural is cursorily mentioned but once. The wood in which the cave of the hermit was situated is unfrequented, "the common people having entertained a strange notion that it is the habitation of supernatural beings."² But while the influence of *The Castle of Otranto* on *The Hermit* is very slight and even problematical, we are left in no doubt on the point in *The Hermitage*, three years later.

William Hutchinson, the author of *The Hermitage; A British Story* (1772), became later an antiquary and topographer of some repute. He published the first volume of his *History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, in 1785. But his antiquarian interests, as becomes evident from the correspondence published in Nichols's *Illustrations of Literary History*, were fully awake long before that. Even about the time when he wrote *The Hermitage* his mind was running on moats, castles, and the Middle Ages. *The Castle of Otranto* was in harmony with his tastes, and he was naturally attracted by it. According to Nichols, Hutchinson also wrote in 1776 "a Romance after the manner of 'The Castle of Otranto,'"³ a book of which unfortunately no copy is available. But the similarity between *The Hermitage* and Horace Walpole's novel is so clearly marked, that one wonders whether the "romance" referred to is not *The Hermitage* itself.

With all his love for the past, Hutchinson seems to have been a thoroughly religious, credulous, commonsense man, and "the Editor" informs the reader in the Preface of the novel that "The work, in general, inculcates resignation to the will of Heaven, filial reverence, and universal love." The author may well have been prompted to write his story as an

¹*The Hermit, A Novel*, by a Lady, 1769, I, 139.

²*Ibid*, I, 79

³*Illustrations of the Literary History of the 18th Century*, 1817, Vol I, p 424

antidote to *The Castle of Otranto*, to the moral of which strong objection had been taken. While Walpole's novel showed that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon their children, in *The Hermitage*, on the contrary, we have the picture of virtuous ancestors protecting their progeny from harm. With this significant difference, the plot of both the writers unravels in the same way. As in the tale of Walpole, the story develops round an ancient prophecy.

After accidentally wounding his kinsman Grinvil, Astianax a descendant of Norban, is forced to relinquish his estates and fly to the hills, where he is afforded shelter by some shepherds. From them, he hears of the hermitage in the hills, and the legend connected with the name of one of his ancestors called Paul du Monte, who had resided there centuries ago. The legend ran that when the hour of Paul Du Monte's death arrived, he gave a crucifix with miraculous powers to his brother, saying, "Wear this, beloved Norban . . . ; sword, pestilence, and storms, shall never injure thee, whilst this crucifix shall hang upon thy neck." "This shalt thou wear," continued the Hermit, "till a good old age shall lead thee through the tranquil hours, and yield thee to the peaceful sleep of death; but I charge thee, never divulge to any of thy kindred what further I relate. When the hour of thy dissolution comes upon thee, enjoin thy son in vows, that with thy armour this gem may hang within the mansion of Du Monte: There it shall hang for ages, till one of thy good race, whom Heaven appoints to give rest unto my ashes, shall reassume it, and with it all its virtues."¹ On hearing this Astianax was like one struck with lightning, for he was wearing round his neck the afore-mentioned crucifix. He hastens next day to the hermitage. He finds there the figure of a man in a meditative posture with a book, an extinguished lamp, and a rosary in front of him. A voice is heard saying, "Here thou shalt remain, to serve thy God in prayer and meditation, until the time shall be accomplished, which hath been written in the book of fate! To delight thy solitary hours, peruse this book; it will enrich thy mind with science; and, from science true religion is derived: For, as

¹*The Hermitage, A British Story*, York, 1772, pp. 118-20

thou advancest in philosophy, the growing ideas will enlarge thy knowledge of the Deity, as his wonderous works and attributes are revealed to thy understanding. On the day in which thou shalt attain the last of these few folios, on that day the will of Heaven shall lead thee hence."¹ The appointed moment arrives fourteen years later, ushered by divine music, harmonious voices, livid flames and the sweet perfume of eastern spices; and simultaneously Grinvil, whose wounds had not proved fatal and who had been searching for him appears on the scene. Astianax is led back to the world by the persuasions of Grinvil. "The field of honour," he said, "calls thee to arms: For even now the young Lord Melvil, with his uncles the Lords Selbourn, and Henricks, and a mighty band of great confederates, have taken arms against our Sovereign. . . ."² Astianax, and an unknown knight who turns out to be his son, win honour and glory in the battle and all their lands are restored to them.

As a story *The Hermitage* has far less interest for us than even *The Castle of Otranto*, and from the above sketch one may wonder what possible connection it could have with Horace Walpole's novel, excepting the central idea of the prophecy or the fact that a hermit is fundamentally connected with the plot in both. But the real influence of Walpole lies in the supernatural element in the book, in the attempt at medieval colouring, and in some of the characters and minor incidents. The marvellous is so profusely introduced into *The Hermitage*, that it would have put the author of *The Castle of Otranto* to shame. There are cataclysmic changes which in a trice alter beyond recognition the face of nature; lightning and thunder are ever ready at hand to herald any event of importance, to punish the evil and succour the deserving. The machinery of Walpole is transported wholesale into his tale by William Hutchinson.

"Some little time preceding to the day of trial [trial about the property], Astianax had retired into the gallery of his mansion, to meditate on the posture of his affairs. . . . As he walked pensive to and fro, on a sudden, behind him, at the

¹*The Hermitage, A British Story*, York, 1772, pp. 139-40.

²*Ibid*, p. 164.

further end of the gallery, he heard a clash of armour: Turning hastily, he observed the buckler and shield to shake, which once his great ancestor Norban wore; and in which, in Palestine, he testified his valour to the Saracens. He regarded the event as accidental, and on pursued his melancholy walk: Hearing the sound again, he looked up, and perceived the coat of mail to tremble on the crooks where it hung, and the gauntlet moved as if it beckoned him. . . . He ascended a few steps, and begun to hand the armour, when he distinguished, within the breast-plate, a light like the fainting rays which glow worms shed within the shadowy bower at eventide. Advancing further, he discovered that the beams proceeded from a small onyx cross, which hung concealed by the armour, suspended in a golden chain, from the collar. . . . A sudden propensity led Astianax to place the chain upon his neck. Soon as the amulet had touched his bosom, from every point of the cross, there fell warm drops of blood; and, with a horrid clangour, the armour shook in every joint!"¹ The resemblance of rattling armour and drops of blood to *The Castle of Otranto* is obvious.

As soon as Jessalind, the wife of Astianax, leaves the family mansion, and the rapacious officers of Lord Melvil come to take possession of it, "all the elements in war seemed to have made this habitation the scene of their dire vengeance! Fierce lightnings blazed in the apartments, and rush upon each gallery! Tremendous bursts of thunder shook the building to its foundation! As if a torrent poured its waters down the stairs, the noise of vast cascades were heard; and, in the painted gallery, the agitated coat of mail, sounded with the clangour of a mighty combat."² Grammar excused, this may well be a passage out of Maturin.

In the character of Father Peter we have the first mild sketch of the monk who was later to become so famous and so mysterious in Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe. "His meagre tall figure, was made lean by a mind of anxiety, and his pale visage and hollow eyes, expressed avarice and envy. He had acquired a bigotry of principle, from example rather than judgment; his monastic learning not advancing his charity,

¹*The Hermitage, A British Story*, York, 1772. pp. 13-18.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

had furnished him with censures and condemnations; and his aversions were more generally exercised than his compassion."¹ In this character, Hutchinson definitely created something new.

The Hermitage also shows an advance in medieval colouring. The suggestion of medievalism of course came from Walpole, but in one particular instance Hutchinson goes farther than *The Castle of Otranto*. The era of the story is fixed in days when "the first vestiges of the Reformation had not taken place in this Kingdom," and in the description of Lord Albion's castle, there is an unusual wealth of realistic detail, minus the romantic spirit. "A trumpeter salutes the stranger allies; they draw near the castle; a massy pile of building thrown together by various architects, all irregular and confused; towers jostle towers, and battlement rides on battlement; a dark unhallowed aspect hangs upon it. Time had dress'd the walls in sable, and gasping loops and yawning grates, beset the horrid front, and strike it with the characters of savage times, of power uncivilized, of slavery, and arbitrary rule. Here the open gallery conducts to each rude tower, whose walls stand garrisoned with men of stone to mock the siege. As the strangers approach the gate, the pavement sounds beneath the horses' hoofs, and hollow arches multiply the noise. They cross the drawbridge of the ditch, and, to the trumpet's summons, the iron studded gates roll rumbling on the massive hinge, and the portcullis, in its passage, harshly grates as the watchmen heave it up. From a multitude of sluices waters rush, and fill the muddy ditch. . . ."²

This is not the description by an enthusiast of Gothic architecture; but the hand of the antiquary and topographer manifestly reveals itself. Although the author of *The Hermitage* is matter-of-fact, and misses that beauty which romanticism manages to impress on "massy" piles of ancient architecture, it is worth remembering that the castle of Torquilstone does not come till almost half a century later. It is doubtful if William Hutchinson would have even used the

¹*The Hermitage, A British Story*, York, 1772, p. 5.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.

supernatural machinery had he not been a strongly religious man and firmly believed that there might be something in it after all. His faith borders on credulity, and he anticipates the views of a famous modern scientist by a century and a half, when he says that "The blessed spirits of those who have left this life, remain our guardian angels; and . . . hover in the upper atmosphere. . . ."¹ While Walpole used the supernatural as an instrument of terror, and as a means to create a medieval atmosphere, Hutchinson regarded it as a perfectly serious instrument of divine agency. The goblins of Horace Walpole became the saints of Hutchinson. *The Hermitage* is interesting because, in a sense, this transformation of *The Castle of Otranto* is typical of the period when didacticism was ever near to the hearts of the novelists. The first imitator of Walpole only found in him a machinery which he considered might be well utilized in the service of the pulpit. His enthusiasm carried him away, and the book is a strange medley of sermons and supernatural. As literature, the novel is too contemptible to have had any effect on contemporary fiction, though embedded in this fustian there are passages which call to mind much later writers of more brilliance. *The Hermitage* is not a terror novel, but that it contained the possibilities of one becomes evident from the enterprising piracy of a publisher who brought out the tale of Hutchinson about three decades later when terror novels were more in vogue, under the title *Kilverstone Castle or The Heir Restored, A Gothic Story*,² with some names altered, the long moral harangues cut out, and miracles and claps of thunder reduced to reasonable proportions. This transformation throws important light on the change and evolution of taste. While Hutchinson had no definite programme when he wrote *The Hermitage*, the author who comes next is a serious theorist writing a story according to plan.

In 1773, was published *Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose*, by J. and A. L. Aikin. The joint authorship has led to some confusion and ambiguity in the exact allocation of individual

¹*The Hermitage, A British Story*, York, 1772, pp. 18-19.

²On the authority of probably the frontispiece, which bears the date 1799, the British Museum catalogue ascribes the book to this date. The copy in the B.M. library is mutilated.

pieces, especially of *Sir Bertrand*, *A Fragment*, with which we are directly concerned. Who wrote the fragment, the brother or the sister, is a moot point, and in face of contradictory evidence it is perhaps best to follow the generally accepted opinion, that the credit of treading in the steps of Walpole should be given to Anna Laetitia, an assumption which has the support of Walpole on its side.¹ The collection itself is interesting for the freshness of outlook that characterizes many of the pieces. It reflects signs of a new spirit, a sympathy with the emotional, imaginative, dim, mysterious aspects of life. There is an imitation of Ossian, and "An Enquiry into those Kinds of Distress which excite agreeable Sensations." In an essay "On Romances," a voice is raised in favour of fiction in general. ". . . Let not those, on whom the hand of time has impressed the characters of oracular wisdom," it says, "censure with too much acrimony productions which are . . . calculated to please the imagination, and interest the heart."² To have raised a voice in support of those who indulged in the unprofitable pursuit of reading novels was at that time no minor achievement, but, in that moral age to have said a word on the side of introducing "the agency of invisible beings" into fiction, was bold temerity. This is what Miss Aikin actually did in her piece "On the Pleasure derived from Objects of Terror." "The old Gothic³ romance and the Eastern tale, with their genii, giants, enchantments, and transformations, however a

¹The strongest argument against this opinion is the evidence of Mrs. Barbauld's editor who only three months after her death, wrote in the memoir prefixed to an edition of her works, "They [the brother and sister] did not think proper to distinguish their respective contributions, and several of the pieces have in consequence been generally misappropriated. The fragment of *Sir Bertrand* in particular, though alien from the character of that brilliant and airy imagination which was never conversant with terror, and rarely with pity, has been repeatedly ascribed to Mrs. Barbauld, even in print." *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld*, ed. Lucy Aikin, 1825, I, xiii-xiv. On the other hand, there is the evidence of Walpole who was personally acquainted with Mrs. Barbauld (*Letters*, IX, 10; XI, 112-13, X, 216-17), and it seems strange that she should have quietly appropriated for half a century the credit and the praise which was bestowed on her, because of this fragment, cf., also *The Critical*, 1786, Vol. LXII, p. 469.

²*Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose*, 1773, pp. 45-6.

³cf. A. E. Longuel on *The Word "Gothic" in Eighteenth Century Criticism* *Modern Language Notes*, December 1923. After it lost the implication of libel in Hurd, it was simply used as synonymous with the word "medieval"; cf. e.g., "The Castle of Otranto A Gothic Story."

refined critic may censure them as absurd and extravagant," Miss Aikin writes, "will ever retain a most powerful influence on the mind, and interest the reader independently of all peculiarity of taste." The analysis of the element of terror is vague and superficial, but the psychological interest and exposition savour of modern methods. The objects of terror are divided into two classes—natural and artificial. The former class, called "terrible," which results in "natural terror," is allied to life, and inclined to be painful in the representation; but the over-balance of pain is averted by the pleasant sensation of gratified curiosity. She cites as an instance, the scene in Smollett's *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, where the count, entertained in a lone house in a forest, finds a corpse just slaughtered in his room. The second type, which is entitled "marvellous," and which results in "artificial terror," has new and wonderful objects as its implements, the sense of pain, in this case, being overruled by the sense of amazement. The special significance of this theory for us is that the authoress applies these ideas to *The Castle of Otranto*. She calls it "a very spirited modern attempt upon the same plan of mixed terror [by which she means 'the terrible joined with the marvellous'], adapted to the model of Gothic romance,"¹ and sets out to write a story on the same lines herself. *Sir Bertrand* is the result.

Sir Bertrand is called *A Fragment* and it really is a fragment of less than ten pages. The story is that a Knight loses his way on a wide heath on "one of those nights when the moon gives a faint glimmering of light through the thick black clouds of a lowering sky." Tired and dejected, he had given up all hope of finding his way, when the sound of a bell attracts his attention. Guided by a light seen at a distance, he approaches "an antique mansion," in which some strange incidents happen. A light appears and glides away mysteriously; a deep sullen toll of the bell is heard; the heavy door creaks upon its hinges, and shuts of itself with a thundering clap; a deep hollow groan resounds through a vault; a figure completely armed is seen. The influence of

¹*Miscellaneous Pieces*, p. 126.

Walpole is strong in these incidents. After passing through an intricate winding passage, a large staircase lighted up by a pale bluish flame is reached; the light disappears; "a dead cold hand" seizes that of Sir Bertrand; a massy iron key falls. The key fits a brazen lock which opens the doors to a large apartment in which there is a coffin with tapers burning around it; gigantic statues with sabres in their hands line the walls. From now onwards the supernatural is reduced to the fanciful machinery of *The Arabian Nights*. As Sir Bertrand approaches the coffin, the sabres clash; the lid of the coffin flies open; a lady appears from within; Sir Bertrand rushes towards her and clasps her in his arms; and instantly the whole building falls asunder with a crash. Sir Bertrand falls into a trance and on recovering he finds a beautiful feast set before him. The feast over, the lady addresses him . . . here the fragment breaks off.

Miss Aikin opens her story at such high pressure that it would have been impossible either to maintain the narrative or even to hold the attention of the reader for any length of time. The fragment comes to an end from sheer exhaustion. After making use of a variety of incidents of natural terror—one close succession of mysterious, blood-curdling events which makes *Sir Bertrand* almost a handlist of the terror novelist's requirements—Miss Aikin was forced to ease off and have recourse to the machinery of the Oriental tale. But, considering that the fragment was only intended as an exposition of her theories and not as a complete, finished, organic whole, the attempt has been admirably successful. Almost all likely suggestions with terrific possibilities in *The Castle of Otranto* are taken up, added to, as in the wild and dreary heath, and utilized with enhanced effect by an aesthetic conception of their use. In the transition one significant change takes place. While the castle of Otranto was a massive building, of which the front as well as the postern gate was intact, with all the turrets and towers fully in repair, "the antique mansion" in *Sir Bertrand* is invested with a "ruinous" air. Affected by the contemporary rage for ruins, Miss Aikin writes, "the injuries of time were strongly marked on everything

about it. The roof in various places was fallen in, the battlements were half demolished, and the windows broken and dismantled. A drawbridge, with a ruinous gateway at each end, led to the court before the building."¹ On the whole, Walpole's praise was justified when he said that Mrs. Barbauld's *Fragment*, "though but a specimen, showed her talent for imprinting terror."² What she, however, extracted from *The Castle of Otranto* and what she suggested by her execution was much too exotic a product for the period, much too sensational and "romantic." Twenty years were to elapse before the aim of her fragment—the sole creation of terror—became the ideal of any writer of a full-length novel. But in contrast with *The Hermitage*, and *The Old English Baron*, which was soon to follow, Miss Aikin's attempt reveals how many-sided was the reaction to the tale of Walpole, and in what widely different directions it exercised its influence.

The author of *The Champion of Virtue*, or, as it is better known by its second title, *The Old English Baron*, was forty-eight years of age when she wrote her novel. In her cast of thought and her outlook she is linked with the common-sense generation that was passing away. The ideals of Clara Reeve have greater affinity with those of Hutchinson than of Miss Aikin, and her sentence in the dedicatory epistle to *The Exiles* in which she begs the protection of the public saying, "the reader will find that, either principally or collaterally, it has always been my aim to support the cause of morality, to reprove vice, and to promote all the social and domestic virtues," has the true ring of the "Old School." But the side of her nature which resulted in the imitation of *The Castle of Otranto* shows itself in her interest in romances and the Middle Ages. She translated Barclay's *Argenis* in 1772, and wrote *The Progress of Romance* in 1785. *The Champion of Virtue*, published anonymously in 1777, is the result of a steady rational mind playing on *The Castle of Otranto*, of which it is acknowledged to be the direct "literary offspring." Miss

¹*Miscellaneous Pieces*, 1773, p. 129.

²*Letters*, XI, 112-13, January 27, 1780.

Reeve thoroughly approved of Walpole's plan to combine the most attractive qualities of ancient Romances and modern novels, and only took exception to the violence of his machinery. "Had the story been kept," she said, "within the utmost *verge* of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention."¹ The justice of her strictures is undeniable and her theory of the supernatural quite sound, but in the writing out of her book she was handicapped by her literal, unimaginative mind. "*The Old Baron* a Gothic story, professedly written in imitation of *Otranto*, but reduced to reason and probability!"²—this was Walpole's satiric comment on its appearance in a slightly revised form under a new title a year later.

Not only did *The Castle of Otranto* provide the inspiration for Miss Reeve and suggest the general plan, but its influence on *The Old English Baron* is more strongly marked in the plot and the conduct of the story than one might expect at first sight. As in Walpole, the time of action is fixed in the distant past, with the difference that like John Leland's *Longsword* (1762), a book distinguished in Miss Reeve's list "among Novels uncommon and Original,"³ the story transports us from Italy to England. While Walpole's tale purported to be a translation from an old Italian source, *The Old English Baron* is supposed to be a transcription from a manuscript defaced by time and damp. There is again an essential similarity in the nucleus of the plot; in both writers the central theme is the devolution of honours and fortune from a usurper to the rightful owner, whose ancestor has come to an untimely and unfair end.⁴ Theodore, the legitimate heir, enters *The Castle of Otranto* as a peasant's son, though imbued with every possible virtue that imagination can conceive; so does

¹*The Champion of Virtue*, 1777. Address to the Reader, p. v.

²*Letters*, X, 216-17, April 8, 1778.

³*The Progress of Romance*, 1785, Vol. II, p. 33.

⁴It has been suggested that the story of Miss Reeve's Lord Lovel was based on the legend concerning the death of the real Lord Francis Lovell, supporter of the pretender Lambert Simnel, and owner of Minster Lovell on the banks of the Windrush near Witney. Cf. *The Novels of Clara Reeve*, by J. K. Reeves (While at Oxford I had the pleasure of consulting this work in a manuscript stage.)

Edmund Twyford in *The Old English Baron*. Father Jerome has his counterpart in the benevolent priest, Father Oswald, and Bianca of Walpole seems to have suggested the procrastination, and the exasperatingly wandering narration of Margery Twyford. Turning to the supernatural element in the novel, dreams, groans, pictures, clashing of armour—all suggested by *The Castle of Otranto*—are used by Miss Reeve. Just as supernatural agency heralded the arrival of the rightful owner in Walpole's story, in Clara Reeve's tale we find that as soon as the announcement of the commissioner's arrival was made, "a sudden gust of wind arose, and the outward gates flew open. They entered the courtyard [again reminiscent of *The Castle of Otranto*], and the great folding doors into the hall, were opened without any assistance."¹ The resemblance which the rightful owner of the estates bears to the murdered ancestor is used in a dramatic manner by both writers. Theodore, who has a strong resemblance to Alfonso, is mistaken for a phantom by the usurper of Otranto. "Ha! what art thou? thou dreadful spectre! is my hour come?"² cries Manfred. When Sir Walter sees Edmund, the son of the murdered Lord Lovel, he exclaims, "It is himself!" and faints away.³ The incidents of Isabella's flight in Walpole, are reproduced in the hero's adventures in the East apartment. "He set the lamp on the ground, and exerting all his strength opened the door, and at the same instant the wind of it blew out the lamp, and left him in utter darkness. At the same moment he heard a hollow rustling noise like that of a person coming through a narrow passage."⁴ In this incident, moreover, Miss Reeve definitely foreshadows one aspect of Mrs. Radcliffe's technique. After rousing the reader's expectations, she resolves the whole incident by saying that it was only the old servant Joseph bringing some wood to make a fire! Thus *The Old English Baron* incorporates most of the properties of Walpole, although nothing very violent or spectacular takes place in it and on the whole the impres-

¹*The Old English Baron*, 1778, p. 196.

²*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., 1765, p. 135.

³*The Old English Baron*, 1778, p. 149.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

sion on the reader is weak and ineffective. But it will, nevertheless, remain to the author's credit that she created the haunted eastern apartment in Lovel castle. Miss Aikin had introduced the "ruinous" air in the exterior of her "ancient mansion"; Miss Reeve introduces it also into internal decorations. "The furniture, by long neglect, was decayed and dropping to pieces; the bed was devoured by the moths, and occupied by the rats, who had built their nests there with impunity for many generations. The bedding was very damp. . . ."¹ Another small article which was to chill the heart of many an innocent heroine later was the tapestry which Miss Reeve invented. "They overlooked the closet in which the fatal secret was concealed; the door was covered with tapestry the same as the room, and united so well that it seemed but one piece."²

With the debt to Walpole so marked, with all the paraphernalia of *The Castle of Otranto* in it, plus some of Miss Reeve's own creations, it will be asked in what particular feature *The Old English Baron* differs from the book of Walpole. The difference primarily lies in its essentially modern tone. Miss Reeve's tale is saturated with contemporary ideas and ideals. She has certainly moderated the didactic fervour of Hutchinson to a great degree. The long harangues have disappeared, and the religious element is not as detached as in *The Hermitage*, being here infused more into the character. But as compared with *The Castle of Otranto*, the novel does read like a homily. Walpole had made Manfred say in the end, "List, Sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!"; he had also in his preface commented on the piety that reigned throughout his piece, and on the lessons of virtue inculcated therein, but this was more in the nature of a sop to the critics than the result of a fundamental didactic desire. In the story itself no such motives had really played a part. But in *The Old English Baron*, all the characters, either negatively or positively, are the author's mouthpieces to expatiate on the beauty of "conjugal affection and happiness." Baron Fitz-Owen's life is made an example of a noble soul dis-

¹*The Old English Baron*, 1778, p. 56

²*Ibid.* p. 108.

charging its "duties as a citizen, a husband, a father, a friend."¹ When Sir Philip Harclay returns to his home from his travels, "he . . . looked round his neighbourhood for objects of his charity."² And from the whole the lesson is deduced unctuously, "Let this awful spectacle be a lesson to all present, that though wickedness may triumph for a season, a day of retribution will come!"³ What further differentiates Miss Reeve's novel from that of Walpole is its construction. While Walpole had adopted the dramatic technique and built his story on the principle of suspense, Miss Reeve's misuse of her material informs the reader of the end of the novel at the very outset. Edmund's prophetic dream detracts considerably from the interest of *The Old English Baron*. An attempt is made to create suspense in Edmund's nocturnal vigil in the haunted apartment. As compared with the rest of the incidents, the scene certainly has more interest; but Miss Reeve's stolid imagination fails in really investing the dry bones with much life. She, moreover, introduces a most plebeian element into her romance, and reduces a world of fine fabling to a stock-broker's office. When the final adjustments are taking place we read, "But before they set out, Sir Philip had a conference with Lord Fitz-Owen concerning the surrender of the Castle, in which he insisted on the furniture and stock of the farm, in consideration of arrears."⁴ But we must not forget that the author's intention was to combine the qualities of modern novels and ancient romances.

The suggestions from *The Castle of Otranto* about medieval colouring have not been thrown away, and the assertion is boldly made in the Preface to *The Old English Baron*, that the novel is "distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners."⁵ Trumpets are frequently blown, and in the description of the combat between Sir Philip Harclay and Sir Walter Lovel, Miss Reeve seems to have taken some pains to be realistic. The influence of the cavalcade of Sir Frederic entering the castle of Otranto is definitely noticeable.

¹*The Old English Baron*, 1778, p. 209.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 187

²*Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵*Ibid.*, Preface, p. iii

³*Ibid.*, p. 198.

In one place there is a mention of Edwin, an old pilgrim, "who would tell old stories, and sing old songs, that one could have sat all night to hear him."¹ It has been pointed out that Miss Reeve held *Longsword* in high estimation; it seems to have even suggested one or two incidents in *The Old English Baron*; but it will not be special pleading to say that the real inspiration of Miss Reeve came from *The Castle of Otranto*. Lest the charge of crediting Walpole with what was anticipated historically by John Leland² be levelled at the whole of this survey, it ought to be stated here that the influence of *Longsword*, though the book forestalled the mediæval side of *The Castle of Otranto* by two years, was surprisingly negligible as a stimulating and inspiring force. Except the commendation by Miss Reeve, and an advertisement to *Reginald Du Bray* (1779), a novel printed at Dublin (a local connection), in which *Longsword* is praised, John Leland's book plays scarcely any part in the contemporary reviews. It was certainly well received by *The Monthly* and *The Critical* when it appeared, but it was not reprinted till 1831. Considering its merit, *Longsword* was born to blush unseen.

To summarize briefly, in her attempt to combine ancient romance with the modern novel, directly under the influence of *The Castle of Otranto*, Miss Reeve's story results in a hybrid combination of Christian virtues, domestic life, and deeds of chivalry. The change in the title from *The Champion of Virtue* to *The Old English Baron* suggests that the author wished to stress the mediæval element. In her desire to keep within the verge of probability, the violence of Walpole is toned down, though almost all his properties are utilized. *The Old English Baron* is an adaptation of *The Castle of Otranto* to the needs of the time. In the process Miss Reeve made some valuable additions—for instance, the haunted suite of rooms, twinkling light, decaying furniture—to the terror-novelist's armoury. Thus transformed,

¹*The Old English Baron*, 1778, p. 86.

²*Longsword* is variously ascribed to Thomas Leland and John Leland. The Bodleian catalogue, Halkett and Laing's *Dictionary*, William Cushing's *Anonyms*, are in favour of Thomas. The *Dictionary of National Biography* suggests John. It is ascribed above to John on the authority of the British Museum catalogue.

the novel appealed not only to the public, but also to the critics, whose opinions simultaneously seem to have been modified to a certain degree. When *The Champion of Virtue* appeared, *The Critical* said, "The story being well contrived, agreeably told, and not very long, may be ranked among those which afford a tolerable degree of amusement, without any dangerous tendency. How far it may be excusable in our times to encourage a belief concerning the existence of ghosts, we shall not here determine; but it may be said that if the dramatic poet is allowed to introduce them with impunity, the novel writer has a claim to a like indulgence."¹ No such indulgence was allowed to *The Castle of Otranto* when it appeared. The opinion of *The Critical* about Walpole's novel itself shows change. Reviewing *The Old English Baron* it said, "This is no common novel—it may, in some respects, claim a place upon the same shelf with *The Castle of Otranto*, which has its faults as well as *The Old English Baron*.—The *Baron* will probably live as long as the *Castle* stands, but he should never forget that he was *born* in the *Castle of Otranto*."² About fifteen years later, *The British Critic* wrote, "When the 'Old English Baron' made its appearance, every mouth was opened in its praise: every line carried fascination along with it. The younger branch of readers found their attention absolutely riveted to the story; and, at its conclusion, they have been actually seen to weep, in the spirit of Alexander, because they had not another volume to peruse."³ The years 1764 to 1777 were a period of preparation. Even Miss Reeve ends the "Address to the Reader" in *The Champion of Virtue* with the diffident sentence, "If you despise the work it will go to sleep quietly with many of its contemporaries, and the ghost of it will not disturb your repose."⁴ But her diffidence proved misplaced. While the spirit of *The Castle of Otranto* had been lost on Hutchinson, while Mrs. Barbauld, like Walpole, had gone too far ahead, Miss Reeve with her steady, conservative mind gave the public exactly what was

¹*The Critical*, Vol. XLIV, p. 154, August, 1777.

²*Ibid.*, Vol. XLV, p. 316, April, 1778.

³*The British Critic*, Vol. II, p. 383.

⁴*The Champion of Virtue*, 1777, p. vii.

most suited to the spirit of the age—a moral tale of higher middle-class life, with a touch of the past for romance, and a dream, a groan, and a ghost for a thrill. Clara Reeve was a reactionary, but by her very retrograde movement, she pushed *The Castle of Otranto* along. Diluted with reason, and sweetened with morality, the high-brow reviewers found in *The Old English Baron* a dose of *The Castle of Otranto* which did not offend even their sensitive palate. And from now onwards the Gothic romance makes rapid progress. The next decade affords a more copious harvest than the meagre one of the present.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF THE "SCHOOL OF WALPOLE"

1778-1788

I

IT was pointed out in the last chapter how, by the end of the period 1764-1777, the first signs of satiety with the school of Richardson and Fielding had become visible, and how the ground was being prepared for a revival of interest in romance. It was also seen that the work of Walpole's last imitator, Clara Reeve, met with decided approval from the critics as well as the public. The time for a revival was certainly ripe, and the movement was ushered in by an increased interest in *The Castle of Otranto* itself. The success of *The Old English Baron* from the contemporary point of view seems to have given a new lease of life to Walpole's novel.

The continuance of the popularity of any work over a length of time can be fairly estimated from the number of occasions on which it is re-issued during that period. Judged from this standpoint, the success of *The Castle of Otranto* in the fifty-five years of the present survey is unquestionable. While *Longsword* was not reprinted even once, Walpole's story was published in various forms at least eighteen times, including the publication in *The Universal Magazine*. From the chronological order of the various editions the significant fact emerges that the popularity of the book was by no means continuous, but that it fell into two distant sections separated from each other by a long period of neglect. The dates support the statement that Walpole's tale had a re-birth in the decade under consideration. The enthusiastic reception of the novel among readers immediately on its publication has already been discussed.

There were three editions in less than two years, the third edition appearing in 1766. But after this the demand seems to have suddenly waned. The fourth edition was not required till sixteen years later in 1782. From now onwards *The Castle of Otranto* continues to appear with greater frequency. It was reprinted in 1786, twice in 1791, in 1793, 1796, and 1800. It is therefore quite justifiable to make the statement that there was a revival of *The Castle of Otranto*. As a corollary we may deduce that general opinion with regard to romances was changing. By December 1781, *The Critical* speaks of "Mr. Horace Walpole's celebrated novel, or romance;"¹ in January 1782, *The Monthly* still calls Walpole's tale "the singular story," but adds, "*The Castle of Otranto*, with all its peculiarities, must be allowed to be . . . [an] interesting and animated composition."² It seems, however, that *The Castle of Otranto* received its immediate impetus from the performance of *The Count of Narbonne*, a dramatized version of the story, on the 17th of November, 1781, at Covent Garden. The play is additional evidence of an increased interest in the book.

Taking into consideration how a trifle like the goblin tale of Walpole was saved from oblivion, and how it continued to figure in the mind of the public, we have to admit that its author was favoured by fortune. Walpole's social standing helped him; and he probably owed his popularity, not to say notoriety, in no small degree to Strawberry Hill. After his death, *The Monthly* said in 1798, "Mr. Walpole seems through life to have wished for notice as a connoisseur in painting and architecture, as well as in literature; and as the building on Strawberry Hill and its furniture form an *unique* among villas, he could not have obtained fame on so small [large?] a scale at a less expence, by any similar draft on public notice. Gothic architecture, so appropriate to sacred purposes on account of its *gloomy grandeur*, lost its secular favour at the same period as that which abridged the Barons of their feudal rights and military splendour . . . but of whatever utility this Gothic miniature may be to future

¹*The Critical*, LII, 4, 56

²*The Monthly*, LXVI, 64.

times, it has certainly contributed not a little to its founder's celebrity."¹

However the fame may have been achieved, the popularity of Walpole, combined with the revival of *The Castle of Otranto*, have from our point of view an immense significance. They provide for us a hypothesis that in the period under consideration Walpole's tale was a living, vital thing, and not merely a piece of notorious eccentricity relegated to the shelf of literary antiques. In dealing with its influence on novels long forgotten, novels the authorship of which even is not known, it is of importance to be able to establish that at the time when they were written, *The Castle of Otranto* was likely to be known to most people with any literary pretensions, through hearsay, the stage, the reviews, or the book itself.

The revival of the book is symptomatic of the times. Fiction in this decade undergoes a great change. If we compare the mass of production in the beginning of this period with that towards the end of it, the comparison is illuminating. New strands are visible. There is a distinct loosening of old traditions. While in the previous decade "Memoirs," "Histories," "Adventures"—of which instances have been given—formed the main types to the exclusion of everything else, by the end of the period 1778–1788 we have the appearance of works which indicate an outburst of emotional life. The popularity of *The Sorrows of Werter* is typical of one aspect of this new phase. First translated in 1779, it was rapidly reprinted year after year. Editions came in 1780, 1782, 1785, and 1789. It has already been pointed out that about 1777 the first signs of discontent with realistic fiction had become apparent. An examination of the annual production in this period (the novels reviewed in *The Critical* may for comparison be taken as fairly representative), also shows that in 1779–1780 we touch the point of lowest activity. In 1771, *The Critical* reviewed 31 novels; 12 in 1777; only 7 in 1779; and 8 in 1780. After this there is a steady increase, the yearly total from 1781 to 1788 being 18, 12, 22, 24,

¹*The Monthly*, N S., XXVII, 65.

38, 30, 43, and 55 respectively. The figure rises to the unprecedented height of 59 in 1789. Of course the application of mathematical standards to literature is dangerous, and the dates and the figures should not be interpreted too strictly. But it is safe to draw a general conclusion that there is a distinct stimulation and a marked increase in productivity in the years 1778 to 1788. Fresh blood is injected into the veins; prose romance is resuscitated; and the period is on the whole characterized by a flexibility and indefiniteness typical of an era of change.

The study of literature as a growth, as an organism, gives a vast significance to periods of transition. It enables us to assign to objects their relative dimensions, a factor of importance in the history of literature. It ought therefore to be pointed out that no cataclysmic revolution takes place in these years. *Evelina* appeared in 1778, was thrice reprinted in 1779, and went into further editions in 1783 and 1791. In 1782, *Cecilia* made its appearance; it reached its fourth edition by 1784 and was again printed in 1786. Upholding the ideals of common sense and the realistic school, Miss Burney is none too kind to romances. The design of the author of *Evelina* is to represent the world as it appeared to a young girl first making her entrance into it. And in the preface, Miss Burney prepares "for disappointment those who, in the perusal of these sheets, entertain the gentle expectation of being transported to the fantastic regions of Romance, where Fiction is coloured by all the gay tints of luxurious Imagination, where Reason is an outcast, and where the sublimity of the *Marvellous* rejects all aid from sober Probability."¹ The popularity of these works was so great that by 1788 *The Critical* talked of "The Burney School."² It is well to keep the success of the anti-romantic Miss Burney in view when tracing the rise of what is vaguely termed the romantic novel—a term which may, for want of a better one, be extended to include all deviations from the traditional path. The old literary ideals in periodical criticism also continue. (They last through the remainder of the century and after.) A few illustrations from the reviews may

¹*Evelina*, 2nd Ed., 1779, Preface, p. xiii.

²*The Critical*, LXV, 485.

be given. In 1787 the stale cry about morality is repeated in a criticism of a novel, entitled *Victoria*. "The author wishes to inculcate filial piety. . . . She who would support the cause of piety and virtue cannot err."¹ *The Monthly* wrote of *Louisa; or the Cottage on the Moor* the same year, "a not unpleasing, but rather improbable tale.

'In all you say or do,
Ever keep probability in view,'

says a celebrated didactic poet; and this is a rule, for the observation of which we have ever been, and ever must be sticklers."² *The Critical* as usual decries Fancy at the expense of Judgment in a review of *Fairy Tales, a Selection*, in 1788. "The only merit of a collection," the reviewer said, "must arise from the judgment with which it is chosen; but what judgment can appear in a compilation, where, to be pleased at all, must be the exercise of fancy alone?"³ Even a decade later, *The Monthly's* comment on *The Lyrical Ballads* reveals the persistence of the old ideals. The passage is well worth quoting.

"Though we have been extremely entertained with the fancy, the facility, and (in general) the sentiments, of these pieces, we cannot regard them as *poetry*. . . . Would it not be degrading poetry, as well as the English language, to go back to the barbarous and uncouth numbers of Chaucer? . . . *Rust* is a necessary quality to a counterfeit old medal: but, to give artificial rust to modern poetry, in order to render it similar to that of three or four hundred years ago, can have no better title to merit and admiration than may be claimed by an ingenious forgery. None but savages have submitted to eat acorns after corn was found."⁴

But side by side with this we feel in these years the definite growth of new elements and the evolution of a fresh standpoint. Though *Evelina* may have temporarily retarded the resurgence of prose romance, it could not stem the tide of the movement which laid stress on imagination and fancy.

Before proceeding to an examination of the new forces,

¹*The Critical*, LXIII, 76.

²*The Critical*, LXV, 157

³*The Monthly*, LXXVI, 449.

⁴*The Monthly*, N S, XXIX, 202.

one important change in outlook must be mentioned—a change which indirectly affects the whole movement. In this period there is the rise of a few authors who shift the emphasis from morality to amusement. This difference in motive was bound to have far-reaching results. In her introduction to *St. Bernard's Priory* the author said, “as I write only for amusement, I hope those that read it will be entirely swayed by the same motive, in expectation of which I patiently abide my fate.”¹ Turning to the evidence of the reviews once more we notice the emergence of some strains which are particularly relevant to this survey. The elements of change may be classified under four heads—the growth of the Historical or Gothic romance, probably the most important development of the period, which will be discussed later in the chapter; a favourable attitude, occasionally, towards the supernatural and the “romantic”; variety and experimentative quality in fiction, with emphasis on a structural technique to excite the reader’s curiosity; and the first signs of a rising interest in German literature.

In 1783 *The Monthly* opened the review of *The Recess* in an extraordinarily sympathetic manner: “*The Tale of Other Times* is a romantic title. It awakens curiosity; it sets us at once on *fairy* land—while Fancy, equipped for adventure, sallies forth in quest of the castle, the giant, and the dragon, ‘rob’d in flames’; and already rapt into vision by its own magic,

‘Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom’d high in tufted trees.’”²

Three years later *The Critical* also reveals the same change in mental outlook. “To admire marvellous occurrences, and to follow, with an eager attention, the author, who, regardless of nature’s operations, employs spirits of the air, or of the earth, to attain his purposes, by means the most extraordinary and astonishing,” the critic said in a review of *Vathek*, “is a passion so deeply implanted, that, from the cradle, it is discovered in the imperfect lisps of the infant, and still adheres to us in spite of reason, judg-

¹*St. Bernard's Priory An Old English Tale* By a Young Lady, 1786, vii-viii.

²*The Monthly*, LXVIII, 455.

ment, and philosophy. The authors who wield these powerful weapons are the favourites of every age and every climate."¹ Feeling, however, that he had gone too far and seeking shelter behind a great name, he added, "Our own Shakespeare owes much to his Ariel, his Robin Goodfellow, and even his Witches."² We seem to touch a halfway stage in a review of *The Rambles of Fancy* in 1786. "If Miss Peacock had not called them the *Rambles of Fancy*," *The Critical* said, "we should have styled them too fanciful. The descriptions are romantic, the situations often improbable: instead of the scenes of nature, we are presented with magical groups of imaginary views. For the glaring scenery of romance, our young author loses the empire of nature, and is content to lose it."³ The reviewer does not seem to have been particularly discontented at the loss either, and in the beginning of his notice called the *Tales* "really" interesting.

A few examples which indirectly illustrate the growth of a desire to arouse curiosity and suspense—a technique which was consciously employed by Walpole and which ultimately leads to Mrs. Radcliffe—will not be out of place. In a review of *Lord Winworth* in 1787, we are told, "The author's address, in concealing the event, deserves commendation: in some parts the interruptions given to the explanation are too artificial, too obviously intended; yet the curiosity is kept in anxious expectation, and we are not satisfied but in the very moment when the explanation cannot any longer be advantageously concealed. The plot is also unfolded with great dexterity; and the dénouement is an interesting part of the work."⁴ The same insistence on the dramatic method of Walpole as compared with the epic manner of Fielding, recurs in *Louisa; or the Cottage on the Moor*. The reviewer said, "This is a pleasing little artless tale, much superior, both in its plan and conduct, to the numerous productions of this class. Curiosity is skilfully excited, expectation kept momentarily alive, and, at last, the intricacies are unravelled very satisfactorily."⁵ In 1787 also appeared a

¹*The Critical*, LXII, 37-8.

²*Ibid.*, LXIII, 225.

³*Ibid.*, LXII, 37-8.

⁴*Ibid.*, LXIII, 308.

⁵*Ibid.*, LXII, 393-94.

novel entitled *Rosa de Montmorien*, and *The Critical* said of it, "Miss Hilditch has probably been told, that it is proper to keep the event a secret; so that she has perplexed her story with difficulties that she cannot consistently unravel, and rendered one half of it unintelligible, that the rest may be surprising."¹ All the three instances cited above occur in the same year, and indicate the development of a new conception in technique, namely, the dramatic conception which had been stressed in *The Castle of Otranto*.

The experimentative and flexible nature of the decade is of course revealed by the variety of novels that were published. Fiction does not fall into types as distinctly as in the previous years, and works with a more individual air appear with greater frequency. A detailed consideration of this phase will be beyond our scope. But as this nebulous tone of the period has a significance for us, the opinion of those spokesmen of their age, the contemporary reviews, will not be beside the mark. "In no period, perhaps," said *The Critical* in 1788, "have we seen novels of such various characters."² A gentleman wrote a story called *The School of Virtue* in 1787, and *The Critical* said of it, "This gentleman dislikes, with some reason, the novels which commonly appear: but his new plan is not deserving of our praise."³ When Miss Gibbes' novel, *The Niece*, was published, the same review exclaimed, "Another attempt at a new plan."⁴ Miss Gibbes herself wrote in her preface, "I must beg leave to observe, that this Novel, being written on a plan *entirely new* . . . I have thrown the several incidents by way of Dialogue, and it would not be any impropriety if it were called

'A Dramatic Novel.' "⁵

The book is interesting as evidence of the desire to strike out in untried directions. It is also at this time that a new foreign influence begins to affect English Literature. When *Henrietta of Gerstenfeld*, *A German Story*, was translated, *The Critical*

¹*The Critical*, LXIV, 480.

²*Ibid*, LXIV, 480.

³*Ibid*, LXV, 486.

⁴*Ibid*, LXIV, 481.

⁵*The Niece, or, the History of Sukey Thornby*, 1788, Preface.

asked in 1787, "Is it in consequence of our common ancestry that we feel a congenial warmth for everything of German origin? or do we only approve of their writings because of the strong, sound, good sense, which is observable in every page?"¹ The results of the geniality which warmed the critic's heart will be discussed at a later stage.

We see thus, that the years 1778 to 1788 are years of transition and growth; they possess all the interest thereof. Fresh experiments are made; new implements are fashioned and their uses tried. There are tendencies intersecting and occasionally counteracting each other. But underneath all this, the outcrop of a spirit of adventurousness is noticeable; a disquietude and restlessness which leads to a quest after fresh woods and pastures new. It is exactly the state most favourable to the exercise of a new influence. A decrease in the force of tradition results in a corresponding increase in intellectual receptivity. The importance of a model at this stage can be supreme; it was pointed out that after a long sleep *The Castle of Otranto* came to life again in these years, and loomed large in the eyes of the public; it provided the necessary model. While the revival of the book owed not a little to the rise of the new spirit, Walpole's tale in its turn became a vital guiding and moulding force in the movement. On the one hand, it satisfied the desire for the quaint and the novel, for the mysterious and the unknown, which is characteristic of the romantic mood; on the other, it gave creative suggestions and pointed the direction for writers to follow. Just as Miss Burney is the apostle of the realistic school in this period, Horace Walpole is unconsciously the personality that sponsors the aberrations from the beaten track. The people who fall under the influence of *The Castle of Otranto* may be divided into three groups—first they who laugh at it; secondly those who in a desire to infuse a touch of romance into a novel of men and manners, only take up some of its suggestions; and lastly, people who fall in the more direct line of descent. They will be discussed in the same ascending order of their merit in the following pages.

¹*The Critical*, LXIII, 389-90.

II

In 1779, Elizabeth, Lady Craven, Margravine of Anspach, wrote a story entitled *Modern Anecdote of the Ancient Family of the Kinkervankotsdarsprakengotchderns, A Tale for Christmas*. The book was dedicated to Walpole, who, besides feeling highly flattered at the compliment, was extremely pleased with the performance itself.¹ He did not see, or decided not to see, any connection between *The Castle of Otranto* and *Modern Anecdote*. There certainly is no serious and obvious imitation of Walpole's novel. A book with that title, written with the avowed object of affording some entertainment to Horace Walpole at Christmas time, when he was confined to his fireside by his usual "unwelcome visitor" gout, could scarcely be expected to be so. But the characters, the setting and some of the incidents in the story incline one to think that the intention of satire was not entirely absent. There seems to be a subtle innuendo in dedicating the tale to the author of *The Castle of Otranto*.

In the centre of Germany lived a nobleman, whom "in consideration for his reader's teeth and the tympanum of the hearer's ears," the author simply chooses to call Baron. A daughter Cecil, a chaplain, and a distant relation named Hogresten form the rest of the household. Into this family are introduced one Madame Franzel and her son Fredric. Cupid takes a hand in the game. Fredric and Cecil fall in love with each other. Puffed with the pride of ancestry, the Baron refuses the proposed match and orders Cecil to marry Hogresten. Desires override parental authority and Cecil springs from a window into her "handsome Fredric's arms." "Can we dispose of her better?" the author asks, and the story ends.

Elizabeth Berkeley seems to have had Walpole's novel in mind while writing her story. The castle, the stair-case, the pictures, the gallery, the sentimentality and the supernatural, all are introduced into *Modern Anecdote* in one way or another. They are ridiculed with a delicate and airy touch, though the author's wit occasionally borders on very

¹*Letters*, XI, 108, XI, 120; January 17 and February 2, 1780

broad humour. Just as in *The Castle of Otranto* Theodore married Isabella because he could talk with her of "his dear Matilda" whom he had lost; in *Modern Anecdote*, Captain Franzel and Madame Franzel enter wedlock because they are thus enabled to comfort each other for their mutual loss when his beloved, and her friend, was forcibly married to the Baron. Madame Franzel, we are told, continued to wear ever after the baroness's picture on one wrist and that of the captain on the other! Romances come in for their share of mockery. Hogresten had been reading "the wonderful romances of ancient chivalry, till he had almost persuaded himself that he was an unfortunate knight, frowned on by the lady of his heart;"¹ but according to the author, Hogresten had for the object of his passion "the Baron's daughter, who neither frowned nor smiled upon him."² The walls of the hall in the castle were hung with family pictures from ceiling to floor; the parlours, bed-chambers, the closets and the garrets, nay, even the very stair-case, werè covered all over. When Cecil is imprisoned in a room in the castle for refusing to marry Hogresten, "she waited till she thought every one asleep; then flew to her honored ancestors and without regard to precedency, or decency, she heaped grandfathers on grandmothers; knights on old maiden aunts; he-cousins bearing armour on she-cousins bearing distaffs. . . . Thus, one by one, the noble family, as fast as she could heap them upon each other, made a pile which reached to the windows: 'Adieu Messieurs et Mesdames,' said she, as she sprung out of the window. . . ."³ Feeling that she could not leave the supernatural entirely out of her story, Lady Craven tortures a reference to a ghost into *Modern Anecdote* in her own Rabelaisian fashion. One morning young Franzel was hastening to his chamber after spending a night in Cecil's room when he encountered Hogresten who "looked at him, and after him for some minutes: indeed, well he might; for had not the rude shock he received from Franzel by running against him, convinced him, that he was not an

¹ *Modern Anecdote*, 1779, pp 8-9.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-82.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

immaterial being, the young man's disordered figure, and hasty steps all together, proved that he was far from being a dissatisfied ghost."¹

The book itself has no important bearing on the rise of the influence of *The Castle of Otranto*, and is only an amusing skit with Walpole's novel probably in view. But the Dedication has more interest, as it throws some light on the personality of Walpole. It is written in an easy, flippant, familiar, half-mocking style. In defending herself against the possibility of censure, Lady Craven says that Walpole himself must bear some of the blame, if any happen to fall to her share, for it is his advice which has led her to make the attempt. The passage is interesting and reveals Walpole's desire to throw off restraint.

"Among many foolish, but true things you have heard me say," Lady Craven writes, "I once expressed a wish to be learned, and acknowledged that I was *ignorance itself*; and to encourage that ignorance you thus advised me: '*Despise what is called learning, give a loose to your imagination, correct by your heart, and polish by your taste*': and you added, 'most books are like pedigrees; the founder of a family is generally a genius, the descendants serve to people the world.'²" It is this wish to give a loose to the imagination which resulted in *The Castle of Otranto* and which links Walpole with the precursors of the romantic movement.

As compared with *Modern Anecdote* a novel by Elizabeth Blower, entitled *Maria*, published in 1785, has much more direct importance. The novel is written in a style of light banter and mild sarcasm. The author sets out with the intention of ridiculing all the current fashions and fads; and the humours of the times are reflected in *Maria* as in a mirror. The book, however, lacks artistic coherence. Miss Blower is occasionally so intent on satire that the distinction between the creations and their creator vanishes. But this does not in any way detract from its value as an indicator of contemporary tendencies. Antiquarianism, the rage of "sentiment," critics, playwrights, Gothic galleries, and Ossianic

¹*Modern Anecdote*, pp 46-7.

²*Ibid.*, Dedication, pp 7-8.

language—all come in for their share of satire. It has special significance for us that *The Castle of Otranto* and its machinery also find a place among the objects on which Miss Blower exercises her wit. During the twenty years since Walpole wrote his novel, taste seems to have changed and developed, and his book is now not so out of harmony with the spirit of the times as it was on its publication. The eccentricity of 1764 has become one of the fashions of 1785.

Maria, who gives the title to the book, is taken under his protection by Dr. Edgware after the death of her father, Dr. Mordaunt. In London she is introduced to Lady Melmoth, who turns out to be the sister of Aubrey, the man she loves. At Lady Melmoth's she is also introduced to Miss Emilia Hampden, whose story is by this frail link connected with that of Maria. After the usual lovers' delays and difficulties, the clouds disperse, peace is restored all round and the author begs leave to "claim the privilege (which historians of our class have for time immemorial preserved) of ending our work, with informing the reader, that our hero and heroine were MARRIED, after all due respect had been paid to propriety and decorum."¹ Our interest lies more in the characters than the plot of the novel. Lady Melmoth, Miss Hampden, and Maria are all infected by the "romantic" mood in different ways. Describing Lady Melmoth to Maria, Dr. Edgware says, "she is almost the only person I know, to whom that air of melancholy you wear would be interesting. There is nothing, I am told, conciliates her affection and regard so closely. Sorrow, from which most people retreat, she pursues."² Maria herself is called "a young lady of a very . . . *pathetic* turn of mind," while the silent and reserved Miss Hampden is described as "a lady of literature." The story opens in London. But to provide an opportunity to poke fun at the Gothic and the supernatural, the scene is shifted to Dunlough Castle in Dorsetshire. When Maria is first introduced to Lady Melmoth this intended visit is being discussed.

"And as to poor Miss Hampden (continued Lady Melmoth smiling) having never yet seen Dunlough, she is

¹*Maria, a Novel*, by Elizabeth Blower, 1785, II, 272

²*Ibid.*, I, 77-78.

impatient to enjoy the delightful horrors of Gothic galleries, winding avenues, gaping chimnies, and dreary vaults; and by way of enlivening the scene, she intends to take with her the tragedies of Eschylus, the poems of Ossian, Castle of Otranto, etc. etc. and I dare say will, by the aid of imagination, behold gigantic hands and legs; and hear the voices of other times come whistling in the winds, and see the grey mists rising slowly from the lake, like an aged man supported by a ghost in mid-air, and presently dissolving in a shower of blood—Are you, Miss Mordaunt,' continued her adyship, 'a lover of this kind of sublimity?'

'I am indeed, Madam,' said Maria, 'there is not a piece of antiquity of that kind in my native shire I have not explored.'"¹

The evidence of *Maria* is added testimony in favour of the reasons we have given to explain the delay in the imitation of *The Castle of Otranto*. An external influence cannot suddenly mould a personality. The most it can do is to stimulate allied natures. And with a few exceptions exactly these were absent at the time when Walpole wrote his tale. The few persons who might have been sympathetic towards it were working in different fields. By 1785, however, as we can deduce from the novel of Miss Blower, the boundaries of the appeal of Walpole's book had extended to average "ladies of literature," and it is in this period that an increase in production on the lines of *The Castle of Otranto* takes place.

But *Maria* possesses something more than a mere documentary interest. Miss Blower was, as we have seen, making fun of *The Castle of Otranto* and its gigantic hands and legs. In one scene she set out deliberately to ridicule the supernatural of Walpole in more detail. All she really succeeds in doing is to anticipate Mrs. Radcliffe's method, and to introduce the "explained super-natural" into her novel. In Walpole, a hollow groan was heard, which the author afterwards suggested was the effect of pent-up vapours; in Clara Reeve intense expectation was created by a mysterious knocking in the night, though finally it proved to be only a servant bringing some wood for the fire; but Miss Blower

¹*Maria, a Novel*, by Elizabeth Blower, 1785, I, 87-8.

goes much further than both these writers and brings us definitely into the domain of Mrs. Radcliffe—strangely enough quite unintentionally. Attracted by "the mellifluous notes of the nightingale," and "charmed with the sweet serenity which possessed all nature," Maria decides to go into the garden one night. Opening a wrong door, she is conducted into a long gallery which communicates with the principal apartments of the castle. "The stillness of the night added a terrific solemnity to the place. The moonbeams, which pierced faintly through the Gothic windows, gave a shadowy view of some old paintings, that were thinly scattered about the walls; and here and there, a wide-yawning chimney, resembling a gloomy cave, presented itself; from one of which, whilst she stood with the door in her hand, Maria saw a lighted torch fall on the ground—the fright depriving her of the power of motion; the door slipped from her hand, and closed upon her."¹ Soon after, "something all black, and large as the most masculine human figure, followed the torch with an equal velocity. . . ." "Whether the terror Maria felt at this moment originated from her supposing the object in question to be a diabolic appearance, or from her alarm, lest a thief had concealed himself there . . . we know not, but the operation of her fear was so powerful," that she again opens the wrong door. After meeting with a ridiculous accident with Lord Newry, "Maria pursued her way to the extremity of the avenue; the attainment of which introduced her to a small gallery she had never seen before; and here, by the light of the moon, which shone with resplendent lustre through a broken window opposite to the place where she stood, she beheld a man lying beside the wall, all pale, ghastly, and weltering in his blood. Maria shrieked aloud at the sight of this dreadful spectacle, exclaiming, with the deep tone of terror—

'Horror and death obstruct my passage!'

when, turning hastily from the sight of so terrific an object, with an intention of regaining the gallery she had left, an aperture in the floor caught her foot, and brought her hastily

¹*Maria, a Novel*, by Elizabeth Blower, 1785, I, 156-8.

on her knees to the ground. Whilst endeavouring to disengage herself, Maria heard a deep groan and an uneasy movement; her head was turned from the spot where it lay, but she concluded it to proceed from the body. . . ."¹ All this is finally explained in a natural manner. The goblin, "something all black and large," was a servant of Aubrey who, having been told that the chimney was a sham and concealed a suite of rooms, had gone up it on an exploring expedition, but the noise made by Maria frightening him, he had let go the torch and himself come tumbling after it. The other alarm of Maria proceeded from "the wonder-working effects of an antique portrait of a wounded man." The reader is reminded of the secret of the black veil in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

We see that *Maria* is more successful as an imitation of *The Castle of Otranto* than a satire on it. Miss Blower's chief intention obviously was to make fun of superstitious terror; all she succeeds in effecting is the creation of terror without the supernatural element. She had hoped that by solving the mystery in the end in a ridiculous manner she would make fear look ridiculous; but her scene is so well worked up, and the satirical intention so beneath the surface, that the joke ceases to be a joke. *The Critical* reviewer said of the book in all seriousness, "We were . . . pleased with the work in general, and much affected with particular parts of it: the author attempts to be pathetic with success; and, the horrors of the night, in the Gothic mansion, point out the intelligent scholar of an able master. The incidents are within the bounds of probability; and, together, furnish some very formidable events."²

Briefly, in tracing the influence of *The Castle of Otranto* on the English novel, Maria throws considerable light on the subject. The Gothic castle, with its passages and galleries, with its gloom and "delightful horrors," suggested by Walpole, has become an object of popular appeal. While Miss Blower herself introduced it into her book with a desire only to mock, there were others who made it a serious part of their work. These writers will be considered next.

¹*Maria, a Novel*, by Elizabeth Blower, 1785, I, 160. ²*The Critical*, LX, 233-4.

III

In a consideration of the half-a-dozen miscellaneous novels which claim a place in this section, one is faced with the problem of their variety. They all differ from one another in their tone, spirit, and conduct. It will therefore be best to make a few remarks about each as it appears in its chronological order and to postpone general deductions to the end. But before proceeding to an examination of individual works, we ought to state that their main importance lies, first, in so far as we find in them traces of ingredients associated with *The Castle of Otranto*, and secondly, in as much as they contain the tentative developments of suggestions popularized by Walpole, developments which ultimately lead to Mrs. Radcliffe and the full-fledged tale of terror.

A year before Miss Blower introduced the Gothic castle into her novel, "a young lady" used the same machinery in her story written in a series of letters, called *The Ring*¹ (1784). From the name one might imagine it to be something different from the contemporary realistic type of novel, but its sub-title, "History of Lady Jemima Guzman," soon corrects the error. The very fact that Miss Burney has been suggested as a possible author of it speaks for itself. But amidst duels and divorces, the petty prattle of drawing rooms and perpetual love making, we find a real Gothic castle with a ruinous air, and a reputation of being haunted.

Lady Jemima is the grand-daughter of a Spanish noble, and her troubles begin when she refuses to obey the peremptory orders of her step-mother, Lady Susan, to marry a marquis she detests. Lady Susan flies into a tempestuous rage. When Jemima asks her maid whether she knew what were to be the likely consequences, she replies, "Oh! no, Madam, no! but we are afraid you will be carried to the Old Castle."² The fears come true. When the castle is

¹E. P. Dodgson in a letter in *The Academy* (No. 2181, pp. 254-5, February 21, 1914) makes the suggestion that the author of *Evelina* was also the author of *The Ring*. He supports his suggestion by internal evidence only. It might be mentioned that in 1785 appeared *The False Friends, in a Series of Letters, by the Author of the Ring*. It is too much to believe that Miss Burney wrote two novels anonymously after the success of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*.

²*The Ring, a Novel, in a Series of Letters*, 1784, I, 144.

reached "the large iron gates grated on the rusty hinges," as they were opened by an old woman whose face looked the emblem of ill-nature. The building was "tumbling down with age"; the hall was paved with black marble cracked in several places; and "the whole seemed calculated to strike [one] with horror and dismay." The chamber in which the recreant maid is confined to recall her to a sense of filial duty, has a casement fastened with a padlock and a window through which a garden overrun with weeds is visible. The sleeping chamber has the same air of decay. And here Lady Jemima spends a night of horrors.

"I now found myself," Lady Jemima says, "in an agony. At every gust of wind I expected the door to fly open, and a hundred hobgoblins to enter the room; for I recollected what the gardener had told me of a strange notion that had formerly prevailed of the house being haunted. Thus did I sit for a full hour in a state of mind not to be described: at last, on hearing the clock strike One, I ventured to bed, having first placed the candle in the window, thinking that to be the safest place; then covering myself up with the bed-cloaths, and recommending myself to the protection of Providence, I endeavoured to compose myself to sleep. I had not lain long, however, before I was disturbed by the strangest noise I had ever heard in my life. Starting up in bed, to my inexpressible terror I found the light of the candle was extinguished; and soon after I heard something tread across the room. I again lay down, and covering myself with the bed-cloaths, heard nothing for some time; till, just as I was trying to persuade myself the whole might be an illusion of fancy, I felt something leap upon my bed. I gave a violent shriek, and through fear and terror I suppose fainted."¹ In the morning when the old woman enters the room she finds three rats in a trap!

The Ring provides probably one of the earliest examples of an attempt to terrify a heroine in a Gothic mansion. Lady Jemima finally escapes from the castle with the aid of Morvo, a gardener who is later identified by a scar on his shoulder as the nephew of Mr. Mordaunt. In one place in the book

¹*The Ring, a Novel, in a Series of Letters*, 1784, I, 155-7.

we find a reference to Gothic architecture which indirectly throws light on the tendencies of the time. Morvo informs Jemima that the castle "has not been inhabited by any of the Guzman family for upwards of these hundred years. In consequence of some strange notions the last inhabitant took in his head, none of his successors chose to make any use of it; . . . but the late Marquis's grandfather having accidentally paid a visit to it, and being a great lover of Gothic structures, intended to have had it repaired. . . ."¹ In *The Ring*, there is no satire on the haunted castle. The episode is introduced in all seriousness, to lend to the book a charm of romance, and to provide a little variety.

Better evidence of a revival and a diffusion of interest in Gothic architecture, is afforded by Miss Lucy Peacock's *The Rambles of Fancy*, in 1786. A writer of allegorical tales for children, even she cannot escape the contagion of the times. In her story "The Ambitious Mother," Orlando and Evermont "continued their march till they came within sight of an umbrageous row of trees, which discovered the vista of a noble Gothic building: twining ivy mantled the sturdy walls, which had withstood the ravages of devouring Time; and the spacious casements gleamed half concealed through the undying verdure."² The title of the story reminds one of Walpole's *The Mystrious Mother*. Strangely, to separate Arnellia from Orlando, the mother of the former adopts the unusual device of informing the world that a bar of consanguinity forbade the union of the lovers, Orlando being her own illegitimate child. By a particular scar on his breast Orlando in the end was proved to be the son of Evermont.

In the same volume we find a passage which throws much light on contemporary tastes. The passage occurs in a "Letter from Miranda to Elvira." The cavern of two sisters, named Aurora and Florimella, is described thus:

" . . . We passed through a door, hewn at the back part of the cliff, and presently found ourselves at the entrance of a hanging wood: in the centre of it stood a little Gothic temple; over the entrance of which was inscribed,

¹*The Ring, a Novel, in a Series of Letters*, I, 150-1

²*The Rambles of Fancy, or Moral and Interesting Tales*, 1786, I, 79

'SACRED TO THE MUSES'

Before it were placed two masterly figures, representing JUDGMENT crowning FANCY. The temple contained a very fine collection of our best authors, ancient and modern. What pleased me most, however, was an obelisk at another part of the wilderness, which seemed to wear the appearance of antiquity; on it, in ancient characters, was engraved,

'TO THE MEMORY OF EDMUND SPENSER,'

with a short account of his inimitable Fairy Queen."¹

One can understand Miss Peacock's enthusiasm for Spenser. She had been inspired by him to write an allegory called *The Adventures of the Six Princesses of Babylon* a year earlier. In *The Adventures*, even, we come across passages about dungeons and castles. The princess Miranda "one evening . . . happening to cast her eyes downwards, she, from a light which gleamed through a crevice, discerned a flat white stone, with a brass ring fixed in the center; and, taking hold of it, found the stone loose; then, pulling with all her strength, she with much difficulty raised it, and discovered underneath it a flight of stone steps: This animated her with a dawn of hope: She flattered herself they might lead to some secret way from the Castle . . ."² *The Adventures* are a combination of *The Faerie Queen* and *The Arabian Nights*, but the above subterranean machinery seems to have been suggested by more recent models. In tracing the influence of *The Castle of Otranto*, however, the popularity of Spenser³ must not be lost sight of as a contributory source. In 1779 was published a prose version of *The Faerie Queen*, under the title, *Prince Arthur; An Allegorical Romance*. The second volume also contains an essay on the origins of Romance. There are passages in the book which, with just the alteration of a few names, would do justice to any tale of horror. We must content ourselves here with a bare mention of the book. The work of Miss Peacock, on the whole, is of a very indefinite, miscellaneous nature. She seems to be groping in new directions. Her ideals are of the traditional

¹*The Rambles of Fancy, or, Moral and Interesting Tales*, 1786, I, 142-44.

²*The Adventures of the Six Princesses of Babylon*, 1785, 2-3.

³On the popularity of Spenser refer to H. G. De Maar's *History of Modern English Romanticism* (1924), Chap. II. There were eight editions of Spenser in the second half of the eighteenth century.

order—*Judgment* crowning *Fancy*—but, in truth, there is more *Fancy* in her than *Judgment*.

Passing by *Vathek*, that orgy of fantastic humour and "artificial terror," which has no claim to a place in this survey, a novel by Elizabeth Helme called *Louisa; or The Cottage on the Moor* (1787), deserves to be mentioned. It is a common story of intrigue and passion, villains and star-crossed lovers, but in its setting, tone and sentiments, it is the herald of the new age. The healthy animalism that characterized the school of Fielding is not here, nor the delicate representation of eighteenth-century life, its follies and foibles, as in Miss Burney. We are, on the other hand, bordering on the regions of romance, of hills and barren moors, of secluded cottages and Rousseauistic sentiment. We feel we are nearer Mrs. Radcliffe than Miss Burney. The drawing-room has been replaced by a thatched hut where people sit down to "their vegetable supper, with a thankfulness and peace that I fear are not always the companions of more sumptuous entertainments." They retire to rest, "with minds so free from guile, that had they waked in eternity, neither envy, malice, or any other discordant passion would have prevented their everlasting welfare."¹

Elizabeth Helme's method of plot construction and her character of Lord Danford have a special significance for us. The story opens on a frosty night in the latter end of December when a loud knocking is heard at the door of a cottage, situated on a large tract of barren land. A lovely girl enters—needless to say it is Louisa. Mrs. Rivers, the occupant of the cottage, gives a start; and a look of horror spreads on her face, at seeing several spots of blood on Louisa's clothes. Curiosity is excited straight away. The attendant of Mrs. Rivers further comments on the resemblance between her lady and Louisa. An explanation of the spots of blood is deferred till the beginning of the second volume and the mystery of the resemblance which the maid noticed, is not resolved till the very end, when Louisa finds a long-lost mother in Mrs. Rivers.

The villain of the piece is Lord Danvers. He is the dark

¹*Louisa; or The Cottage on the Moor*, New Edition, 1787, I, 103.

and gloomy tyrant who reminds one of Manfred in *The Castle of Otranto*. There is an air of mystery about him. He is the guardian of Louisa, who describes her first meeting with him thus: "His eyes momentarily met mine; but starting, and changing of a ghastly paleness, he hastily removed them, as from an object whose sight was obnoxious";¹ she says further, "the Earl was a handsome man, apparently between fifty and sixty; of a commanding air, and an eye so penetrating, that when I found it fixed on me, I shrunk, as conscious of some defect. Though my confusion was great, the Earl's was equal; and three days passed before our looks could meet without a visible confusion on his side."² This penetrating eye which reminds one of Vathek was to become a part of the silent, mysterious, awful characters in Mrs. Radcliffe and in *Melmoth the Wanderer* later. The Earl in time so overcame his aversion for Louisa that he forced her to fly from the castle in self-defence. It was to save herself from his advances that she wounded him one night, the night on which she knocked at the cottage on the moor, covered with blood. Finally everything is cleared up; Lord Danvers, who is really the great-uncle of Louisa, commits suicide; the mystery is solved. In the novel, there are lords and ladies, a duel and an attempt at abduction, a trip to India, and a scene in a convent at Paris. But amidst these stock incidents and characters, there is a definite attempt at creating suspense, not only in individual scenes, but in the story as a whole. And we also find here a character who is invested with some of the qualities which we found in Walpole.

The same year Miss Ann Hilditch published her *Rosa De Montmorien*. The comment of *The Critical* reviewer was quite justified when he said that in a desire to keep the event a secret, Miss Hilditch had "perplexed the story with difficulties which she cannot consistently unravel," and that she had rendered one half of her book unintelligible to make the rest surprising. The complication in the book arises from the very unlikely device that Rosa de Montmorien masquer-

¹*Louisa; or The Cottage on the Moor*, New Edition, 1787, II, 24

²*Ibid*, II, 25.

ades in England in masculine garb, under the name of Ernestus de Beaufort.

Rosa De Montmorien is a mixture of strange ingredients, ill-mingled, ill-assorted. The novel contains a description of the Houses of Parliament and its debates, a criticism of the vices of the fashionable beaux of London and Paris. But side by side with this we have a gloomy count, a holy hermit and a Gothic castle. Chronology is outraged. But in spite of these defects the novel occupies a prominent place in tracing the influence of *The Castle of Otranto*.

"In the North of England," we are told, "near the confines of that castle immortalized by the *residence*, and sanctified by the *martyrdom* of the sainted Mary, de Beaufort possessed a small estate. The grounds were laid in the most romantic taste, and the mansion immured by a thick wood, whose murmuring foliage softly whispered to the chilling gale, which blew bleak through the lofty trees which secreted the mansion from the observation of the curious traveller."¹ When Rosa is married to the Count de Montmorien in accordance with her father's wishes, and against her desires, she is conveyed to the "gloomy mansion" of the Count's ancestors. "She shuddered as she entered the dreary avenue which led to it, and seemed to feel a presentiment of the miseries which she was there to experience.—The ponderous gates were thrown open for them, and closed on their entrance.—The humid walls of the cloisters, through which they passed to their apartments, were decked with mouldering trophies and ruinous sculptures (the monuments of his ancestors, whose remains, with tenacious pomp, were deposited in this castle) chilled every feeling of the unfortunate Countess."² The passage reminds the reader of Emily's approach to the castle of Udolpho.

The Count, moreover, is represented as a jealous man, the ferocity of whose nature was only too well known. He kept a close guard over Rosa and was always suspicious of her actions. We can trace here the gradual evolution of the mysterious and gloomy tyrant of the tales of terror. In the

¹*Rosa De Montmorien, a Novel*, 2 Vols, 1787, I, 115.

²*Ibid*, II, 9-10

incidents of the hermit's story, the scene shifts to the days of the Baronial Wars. It will be shown in the next section how historical tales had become very popular at this time. The very mixture of incongruous elements in *Rosa De Montmorien* indicates the undecided, indefinite nature of the decade, and the emergence of new objects of popular appeal.

Another instance of the use of a Gothic castle occurs in *Melissa and Marcia, or the Sisters*, in 1788. The heroines are the daughters of Justice Bumble who lived in "a large Gothic building, with innumerable passages and useless rooms."¹ The author depicts in the father a character on the lines of Sir Roger; in the sisters, he paints companion portraits of a good girl and a bad girl, with attendant benefits and miseries. It is the misfortunes which befall Melissa, Lady Westland, that have an interest for us.

Melissa is a pert and pretty young lady, inconsiderate and gay and addicted to pleasure. When Lord Westland complains of her unpunctuality, saying that the Duchess of B had already arrived, she answers, "If she is inclined to keep gothic hours, am I, upon her account, to be put out of my way?" One wonders if this novel should not have been included with Lady Craven's *Modern Anecdote*, and Miss Blower's *Maria*, among works with a satirical intent. But the author on the whole inclines more towards seriousness than satire. The fact is, moreover, significant that in a footnote in the middle of the first volume,² we are told, "This novel was written in the beginning of the year 1778."

Lord Westland, enraged at the infidelity of his wife, mysteriously orders her to prepare for a journey. After travelling three days from London, at last, "Lady Westland perceived that she was in the midst of an immense park, or rather forest, for it was covered with trees, most of them of the growth of two centuries; every thing here appeared as wild and forlorn as possible. Amidst a venerable grove of oaks arose the turrets of a castle; it was a gothic pile of building, which seemed to defy the iron hand of time, surrounded by a deep fossé, with a drawbridge, gates, and courts within

¹*Melissa and Marcia, or the Sisters a Novel*, 2 Vols., 1788, I, 2.

²*Ibid.*, p. 138.

courts.—The carriage stopped; one old servant appeared with a bunch of rusty keys:

‘Strait the doors
Opening their brazen folds,’

creeaked horridly on their hinges.”¹ Here is a prodigious hall where solemn stillness reigns; the echo of the footsteps on the pavement is heard; and after traversing many winding passages and passing through a suite of rooms, Lady Westland is conducted to a chamber with grated casements.

A slight atmosphere of mystery is created, and surprise occasioned, when Melissa, one day, reads written on the snow in the garden, “Let grief give way to hope.” In place of the yolk of her egg, the same evening she finds a note requesting an assignation. “Gracious Heaven!” cried Melissa softly to herself, “whence can this come? . . . Shall I speak, or be silent?—Perhaps the Castle is haunted, and some horrid spectre may appear.”² While she was debating the point, she saw the tapestry move, and, terrified beyond measure, she screamed in agony and fainted. The ghost in the tapestry finally takes the shape of “a squat square young man, with plump red cheeks, golden locks . . . and large staring eyes.”³ It was Prattle, the lovesick swain, a tailor’s son.

In passing it might be mentioned that the contemporary taste in landscape gardening⁴ also affected the terror novel in the long run. “In the distribution of the grounds [at the country residence of Lord Westland], the hand of Brown had assisted, but not forced nature.”⁵ We find there a meandering stream, a velvet lawn, a rising wood, a few temples judiciously placed, and a cave which was the special favourite of Melissa. These artificial caves and ruins were turned to a new use by the horror romanticists later. The scene of languorous amours became the haunt of howling spectres or black-browed banditti.

¹*Melissa and Marcia, or the Sisters: a Novel*, 2 Vols., 1788, I, 237.

²*Ibid.*, I, 262–3.

³*Ibid.*, I, 271.

⁴cf Myra Reynolds: *The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry* (1896), Chapter III, on *Gardening*, also Kenneth Clark: *The Gothic Revival*, (1928), Chapter III, on *Ruins and Rococo*.

⁵*Melissa and Marcia*, II, 205.

An attempt is made really to excite a sensation of fear in the description of Melissa's flight from Beachly. "The moon shone, and she tripped over the Lawn as fast as her feet would carry her.—She had reached the shrubbery, and, as she advanced, the trees intercepted the light of the moon, so that her courage failed as the darkness encreased.—Each knotted, shaggy trunk of a tree, her alarmed imagination transformed into some horrid spectre, some fearful giant. . . . But of a sudden horror again assailed her; something brushed by her, and easily overthrew her tottering frame; luckily she fell on the moss, and received little hurt.—A cold dew now stood on her face, her limbs shivered, her teeth chattered, and she had not resolution to move . . ." ¹ Soon afterwards the bleating of a sheep is heard!

The writer of the last novel to be considered in this section—*Emmeline, The Orphan of the Castle* (1788)—is a person who far exceeds in merit, if not in importance, all the authors who have been dealt with so far. She does not belong to the terror school, and her novels usually move on domestic lines in aristocratic circles, with prim propriety always in view. But she claims a place in this survey on account of her use of Gothic structures and her descriptions of nature. Historically, her first novel has the most importance for us, although she makes use of an ancient mansion with a tapestry room, a quiet, deserted wing, and a turret in her *Old Manor House* also five years later. *Emmeline* is interesting as coming before the work of Mrs. Radcliffe.

The story of the book is the not uncommon one of a poor distressed orphan who, after passing through various trials and vicissitudes, is finally rewarded for her virtues by a happy marriage. The scene opens in Mowbray Castle which is described thus:

"It's venerable towers rising above the wood in which it was almost embosomed, made one of the most magnificent features of a landscape, which now appeared in sight.

The road lay along the side of what would in England [Mowbray Castle was in Wales] be called a mountain; at it's feet rolled the rapid stream that washed the castle walls, foaming over fragments of rock;

¹*Melissa and Marcia*, II, 234-35.

and bounded by a wood of oak and pine, among which the ruins of the monastery, once an appendage to the castle, reared its broken arches, and marked by grey and mouldering walls, and mounds covered with slight vegetation, it was traced to its connection with the castle itself, still frowning in gothic magnificence; and stretching over several acres of ground: the citadel, which was totally in ruins and covered with ivy, crowning the whole. . . ."¹

The castle itself plays a very minor part in the story, but the little that it does, shows that the idea of gloom and ghosts and spectres was associated with it.

The French valet of Mr. Delamere was coming out of his master's chamber; "but by missing a turning which should have carried him to the kitchen, he was bewildered among the long galleries and obscure passages of the castle, and . . . continued to blunder about till the encreasing gloom, which approaching night threw over the arched and obscure apartments, through windows dim with painted glass, filled him with apprehension and dismay . . ." When Emmeline suddenly comes out of a door, "The man, whose imagination was by this time filled with ideas of spectres, flew back . . . and added the contortions of fear to his otherwise grotesque appearance, in a travelling jacket of white cloth, laced, and his hair in papillotes."²

One more instance may be cited, an incident which reminds us of the flight of Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto*, and which exhausts the Gothic element in Mrs. Smith's novel. Emmeline is making preparations for departure from Mowbray.

"A total silence had long reigned in the castle, and her almost-extinguished candle told her it was time to take some repose, when, as she was preparing to do so, she thought she heard a rustling, and indistinct footsteps in the passage near her room.

"She started—listened—but all was again profoundly silent; and she supposed it had been only one of those unaccountable noises which she had been used to hear along the dreary avenues of the castle. She began anew to unpin her hair, when a second time the same noise in the passage

¹*Emmeline, The Orphan of the Castle*, 4 Vols, 3rd Ed, 1789, I, pp 90-1.

²*Ibid*, I, pp 32-33.

alarmed her. She listened again; and while she continued attentive, the great clock struck two."¹ After some time a fumbling at the lock is heard, and finally Mr. Delamere bursts in. And now a chase takes place. Emmeline finally gives Delamere the slip and though a gust of wind blows out her candle, makes her escape through the subterranean passages.

To sum up, it was pointed out in the beginning of this chapter that in the decade, 1778-88, fiction was undergoing a "romantic revival." The most striking illustration of this phase is of course the evolution of the historical romance, which will be considered in the next section; but the varied nature of the novels discussed above is the best evidence of a diffusion of the new spirit. These works are, moreover, important as indications of the direction taken by the movement. The basic motives of the innovations may be summarized under two heads—a sense of mystery and a love of chivalry, both important constituent elements of *The Castle of Otranto*. And herein lies the importance of Walpole's novel. It is true, there is no evidence to *prove* conclusively that any of the authors was directly influenced by Walpole, but, on the other hand, we must not lose sight of his immense popularity, or the fact that *The Castle of Otranto* had a revival during these years. The lines of development certainly have a marked relation with the "goblin tale."

The human mind lends charm to objects by contraries. Romance always is where we are not. Fiction in the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century had concentrated on reason, common-sense, and satirical wit. By contrast, a reaction brought with it a longing for imagination, mystery, idealism, and gloom. Some writers went directly back to the Middle Ages. When Miss Lee wrote her *Recess*, *The Critical* agreed with the author "that the age of Elizabeth was that of romance."² But there were others who, although stung by the same longing, did not resort to the medieval to satisfy that impulse. They sought other means of gratification and fresh outlets. Sentimentality enters fiction. Pas-

¹*Emmeline, The Orphan of the Castle*, 4 Vols., 3rd Ed., 1789, I, pp 75-77.

²*The Critical*, LV, 233.

toral idealism begins to attract. From a stress on photographic representation of life, there is an increased interest in action and adventure. And at this time, when people were groping after new sources of pleasure, *The Castle of Otranto* satisfied most of the requirements of the age. It even furnished writers with the materials to work on. The attraction towards chivalry, under the influence of Walpole, resulted in historical tales. But Walpole's novel also gratified the love of mystery by its castle, its technique of suspense, and its element of terror.

Of all these ingredients Gothic architecture combined in itself the greatest variety of appeals. It had about it the glamour of the past; it had a gloom and "a dim religious light" which touched the imagination; it evoked sensations of awe; and it possessed the capacity of playing on that ingrained, primitive element in human nature, the element of natural or superstitious fear. Elizabeth Blower had made fun of Walpole's tale, and of people who were fond of the "sublimity" which revelled in the gloom and "delightful horrors" of a castle; but considering the number of pleasing elements concentrated in a Gothic mansion, its popularity is not inexplicable. The human fashion satirized in *Maria* invades also the realms of fiction. The extensive quotations given above illustrate the rise of this interest. The very variety of the novels into which it is introduced indicates how an antique edifice satisfied the craving for something strange, emotional, and mysterious. A sketch of real life in the Burney style, like *The Ring*; *The Rambles of Fancy* by a writer of allegorical tales for children; a strange medley like *Rosa de Montmorien*; edifying novels of genteel domesticity typified by *Melissa and Marcia* and Mrs. Smith's *Emmeline*—all take up the Gothic castle in their own way. The same desire to heighten the tone is reflected in *Louisa*, or *the Cottage on the Moor* and *Rosa de Montmorien* in different ways. The characters of Lord Danford, and Count de Montmorien have a gloomy and mysterious air. This phase also accounts for the atmosphere of ruin with which ancient buildings are usually invested. Lastly, it ought to be mentioned that Walpole's technique in the construction of his

novel is not neglected. Tentative efforts, in the words of a *Critical* reviewer, "to elevate and surprize" are made by Elizabeth Helme and Ann Hilditch.

The element of terror is inseparably associated with the Gothic castle in these writers, although they differ from each other in their use of it. In *The Ring*, the aid of atmosphere is called in to frighten Jemima; in *Rosa de Montmorien* the air of gloom strikes the countess with a superstitious dread; in *Melissa and Marcia*, the movement of the tapestry in the heroine's chamber is the source of terror; Emmeline is frightened by strange noises. We have here the first signs of the movement which leads to Mrs. Radcliffe. It ought, however, to be made clear that the element of terror in the stories is only incidental. The passages cited almost exhaust the "horrid" part. But the importance of the authors consists in their taking the castle out of its medieval setting. While Gothic architecture was used in historical novels as in keeping with the "tales of other times," the castle is introduced here for the sake of the castle, purely on account of its emotional and romantic appeal. The writers recognize its possibilities as an implement in their literary armoury and take to it eagerly. The name of terror novels cannot by any manner of means be given to the works discussed; but in the vague use of fear as a source of pleasure lies their second significant contribution. In practice, the authors may not be able even to create a shiver, but it is for the attempt that they deserve to be remembered as the precursors of Mrs. Radcliffe. Their achievement is only a side development of *The Castle of Otranto*. It is, in a sense, a disintegration of Walpole on the lines of Mrs. Barbauld's *Fragment*. Writing novels of contemporary life, the authors are attracted only by the fearful of Walpole's tale and not with the feudal of it. That important phase next claims our attention.

iv

The scholarly work which revealed a revival of interest in the Middle Ages and Romance has already been discussed.

It was pointed out that before active creation on the lines of *The Castle of Otranto* could start, it was essential that the discredit into which romances had fallen should be removed. The increase in the number of imaginative works dealing with chivalry and the ages gone by in this decade is evidence that the work of the Wartons, Richard Hurd, Macpherson and others effected this change.

The stirrings of the new spirit manifested themselves in a variety of ways. A work by Alexander Bicknell entitled *The History of Edward Prince of Wales, commonly termed The Black Prince*, published in 1776, gives an interesting indication of the dissemination of interest in the past, and of the changing standpoint of the period. In his introduction, the author writes, "Latter ages seem to have lost even the idea of the romantic spirit, many instances of which are here recorded, that constituted so capital a part of chivalry; and though sometimes ridiculously exerted in defence of a Lady's beauty, or in equally unimportant croisades, yet, as it caused an exertion of gallantry, valour, generosity, and many other virtues, was certainly laudable, and deserves not the general censure it has received"¹ Alexander Bicknell's work is moreover interesting as marking a halfway step between history and fiction. "As my chief view has been to make this work entertaining as well as instructive," he said, "I have not interrupted the narrative with references to the original authors . . . nor have I been particular in noting the year in which every event happened . . ."² This is history being written in the manner of a novel; writers soon followed who tried to write novels in the manner of history.

Changes in the world of literature are more in the nature of an evolution, than a revolution. "Freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent." In the last quarter of the eighteenth century people wanted romance, they wanted even a romance of chivalry, with its heroic love, valour, sacrifice, and exotic excitement. But they wanted also probability. Walpole had given a tale of chivalry, supernatural marvels, and adventure. It had failed to pass the censorship

¹*The History of Edward Prince of Wales, etc.*, London, 1776, p. xiii.

²*Ibid.*, p. xv.

of reason. A compromise was therefore necessary; and it was soon effected. There was a rationalization of *The Castle of Otranto* again. The names of a few people from the pages of history, a real incident or two from the past, a vague historical background, gave to a chivalric tale the badge of credibility which ensured its acceptance. The critical attitude towards the new pseudo-historical fiction in this decade is the best evidence, not only of the requirements of the period, but also of the eagerness with which the type was received.

When the first volume of *The Recess* was published in 1783, *The Critical* said, "This little volume is full of surprising and yet not improbable events. The author, Miss Lee, properly observes, that the age of Elizabeth was that of romance, and she has accordingly chosen it for the era of her heroines." After commenting on the subterfuge of an obsolete manuscript, and on "the wonderful coincidences of history," the critic continues, "But let not the fair author think, that we wish to discredit her performance. It is new; it is instructive; it is highly interesting; and we wish that this mode of writing were more frequent . . ."¹ A work, new, interesting, instructive, probable and romantic—this is what the age required. It is one part of this spirit which resulted in a revival of *The Castle of Otranto*; the other modified its inspiration into the shape of historical novels. To adapt the words of *The Critical* from the review of the next two volumes of *The Recess*, the new type fixed the attention and gratified "the imagination, without an insult to the judgment."² Herein lies the compromise.

Four years later in a review of *William of Normandy*, *The Critical* again expressed its approbation of the species, though not of the particular work. "This is a very imperfect attempt": it said, "historical novels are a pleasing species of composition, when well executed; but William of Normandy wants the support of history, of probability, of interest, and even of typographical accuracy. These are the spurious insects, produced by the sunshine which has illumined the 'Recess.'"³

¹*The Critical*, LV, 233.

²*Ibid*, LXI, 214.

³*Ibid*, LXIII, 307.

The comment of *The Monthly* on the first volume of Miss Lee is vague and indefinite, and little is said about the book in particular. The expectations of the critic were so highly romantic that, disillusioned by the preface which informed the reader that the ground of the work before him was real and not imaginary, he said in a tone of disappointment, "what we took for a romance was only a history!"¹ But there was a definite expression of opinion in a review of *Alan Fitz-Osborne*, four years later. "The writer of an historical tale, provided the story be happily chosen, may be entitled to a considerable share of praise," stated *The Monthly*. And then follows an elaborate exposition of principles which shows that the critics regarded the genre in a serious light. "To blend truth and fiction in such a manner as that the work shall have no dissimilar parts; to give to the latter the garb and appearance of the former, is not, perhaps, an easy task. Nature must be observed, and studied: men and manners must be steadily and attentively contemplated; and though in such a composition, portraits may be highly coloured, though there may be sometimes an exaggeration of character,—yet an air of verisimilitude and probability should pervade and distinguish the whole."²

But the picture will be incomplete without a mention of the dissenting attitude of sticklers on morality. A passage from *The Gentleman's Magazine* in a review of *The Recess* may be quoted as an illustration. ". . . Though Leicester, Essex, and Sidney must interest us more than those men of straw that flutter through our modern novels, we cannot entirely approve the custom of interweaving fictitious incident with historic truth."³ A mixture of truth and fiction was likely to mislead youth—this was the ground on which objection was usually raised. And it might be mentioned in passing that this question of propriety and impropriety continued to be discussed well through the remaining part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, until the appearance of Sir Walter Scott placed the claims of the historical novel on an indisputable basis.

¹*The Monthly*, LXVIII, 455.

²*The Gentleman's Magazine*, LVI, 1, 327.

³*Ibid*, LXXVII, 190.

To turn to an examination of the novels themselves, the first book that claims our attention is *Reginald Du Bray, An Historick Tale*, published at Dublin in 1779, four years before *The Recess* of Miss Lee. The novel did not attract any immediate notice in England. The first reference to it is in *The Critical* in 1786, when it seems to have been re-issued with a "prefatory discourse, by a celebrated female pen," which according to the reviewer was "one of the essays, part of the joint stock of Mr. (now Dr.) and miss Aikin . . ." ¹ This discourse, in all likelihood, must have been the essay of Mrs. Barbauld, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror." The fact is significant, for it reveals the association of the Gothic with the element of terror in this period. One was the inseparable concomitant of the other. At this stage a distinction between a tale of terror and a historical novel did not exist. Although fear had been recognized as a source of pleasure, its proper place was supposed to be in a tale of Gothic times.

Reginald Du Bray, written "By a Late Lord, Greatly admired in the Literary World," does not show any direct traces of *The Castle of Otranto*. On the other hand, we are informed in a short advertisement that the performance "appears to be the literary offspring of Longsword." ² But it deserves mention, not only because it precedes Miss Lee by many years, but also as it seems to have been the source of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels.

The story opens in the reign of Henry III, when we are introduced to Reginald Du Bray, a valiant knight who has served in the Holy Wars, and to his daughter Matilda. The complications of the book are provided by a neighbouring baron, Lord Ardulph, whom family feuds, and the enmity existing between the two houses, cannot prevent from bestowing his heart on Matilda. Edmund de Clifford is the hero, who saved the life of Reginald in the Holy Land. Disguised as a peasant, he comes to the rescue of Matilda when the emissaries of Ardulph were carrying her away. After many troubles and misunderstandings, Edmund

¹*The Critical*, LXII, 469.

²*Reginald Du Bray, An Historick Tale*, 1779, p. 2.

killed Ardulph in single combat; and the hero and the heroine were happy ever after.

When Edmund is trapped treacherously by one of Lord Ardulph's men, he is carried to the baronial castle. "The drawbridge was up, and they were obliged to hail those who watched, to give them admittance. Every object that was thought capable of inspiring fear, was presented to the view of Edmund. He saw the gleam of arms, by the ray of the distant star. The clanking of the chains of the portcullises, opposed to silent horror, that reigned elsewhere, added to the terror of the scene."¹ It is this element in the book which probably justified the "prefatory discourse" of Miss Aikin.

The comment of *The Critical* on the novel is interesting. "This may be styled an Heroic, rather than an Historic Tale," the critic remarked, "since it abounds with distressed damsels, disguised heroes, tilts and tournaments, and has little connection with history . . ."² The sentence may well be applied to *The Castle of Otranto*. The author of *Reginald Du Bray* tried to catch the atmosphere of the Middle Ages. He was concerned more with historical colouring than historical fact. In this sense the book has greater affinity with *The Castle of Otranto* than with *Longsword*. But the distinction between heroic and historic tales made by *The Critical* here, should not be stressed too far, for, as we shall see, this differentiation frequently vanished and the name of Horace Walpole was definitely associated with both types in contemporary criticism. *Reginald Du Bray*, on the whole, has far more colour in it than the more famous novel that follows.

In 1783 was published the first volume of *The Recess; or a Tale of Other Times*, by Sophia Lee. The reception of the book encouraged its author to add two more volumes to it two years later. The plot of the novel revolves round the unfortunate loves of Matilda and Ellinor, two sisters who are supposed to have been the daughters of Mary, Queen of Scots, by a secret marriage with Norfolk. Queen Elizabeth, King James, Sidney, Lord Burleigh, Leicester, and the Earl of

¹*Reginald Du Bray, An Historick Tale*, 1779, pp. 94-5.

²*The Critical*, LXII, 469.

Sussex—these well-known figures are the actors in the story. The experiment was a bold one and it succeeded. Miss Lee's choice of her subject was lucky; there was a charm about the very names which pre-disposed people in their favour; the period selected was far enough to be romantic, and yet not so far as to be totally unknown and unfamiliar. With these points on her side, Miss Lee, moreover, introduced so much of the eighteenth century into *The Recess* and so little of the sixteenth, that the age found almost nothing in the book to disapprove, and enough that satisfied the new love for the past, the longing for something fresh, unusual and exciting. The novel is a curious medley. Pastoral idealism in "sermons in stones and good in everything" style; sisterly jealousy of the most realistic type; a trip to Jamaica in the manner of any picaresque story; didacticism; Gothic machinery—all have a place in the tale of Miss Lee.

While *Reginald Du Bray* showed no signs of *The Castle of Otranto*, there is a definite leavening from Walpole in this *Tale of Other Times*. We have the usual manuscript device to start with; St. Vincent's Abbey, the residence of Matilda and Ellinor, has "all the Gothic magnificence and elegance"; the tapestry which conceals the spring of a secret repository is also here. These properties had been used before and it cannot be said they show the inspiration of Walpole. But when we proceed further, resemblances become more marked. In *The Castle of Otranto*, Lord Frederic was guided to the hermit in the wood near Joppa by his dream; the place of Ellinor's refuge in *The Recess* is revealed to Henry Tracey, the favourite aide-de-camp of Lord Essex, by the same agency. Walpole's Matilda used to "sit and gaze" at the picture of "the good Alfonso" for hours, and felt that her destiny was linked with something relating to him; the portraits in the underground recess excite similar feelings in the hearts of the two sisters in Sophia Lee's novel. "Ah! who can these be? cried we both together. Why do our hearts thus throb before inanimate canvas? surely everything we behold is but part of one great mystery."¹ There were woods and ruins near the castle of Otranto; the recess is

¹*The Recess, or a Tale of other Times*, 4th Ed., 1792, I, p. 9.

similarly provided with them. Miss Lee is also, historically, the first writer after Walpole to make use of subterranean passages in her book. She adds to the complexity of Walpole's properties. The precipitate retreat of Mrs. Marlow and the sisters into the underground recess which gives the name to the novel, is described by Matilda thus:

"The House Keeper . . . having dispersed the other servants, preceded us to a store-room on the ground floor, and opening a press, unfastened a false back, which conducted us into a closet, dark, but for our torches. She then lifted a part of the floor, fitted very neatly, and discovered a narrow pair of stairs, down which we went, leaving her behind. . . . We past through several subterraneous passages built on arches, and preserved from damp by cavities which passed through every statue that ornamented the garden, 'till at last we reached our prison. But judge of my astonishment, when I found the so often-sought entrance was a door of the size of that portrait which first gave me such singular sensations, and which I perceived was made to fall together, with a spring almost imperceptible."¹

Miss Lee tries to evoke a feeling of fearful suspense in one scene in *The Recess* on lines more or less similar to those of Isabella's flight in *The Castle of Otranto*. Pursued by Manfred, Isabella was anxiously seeking the secret spring when "a ray of moonshine streaming through a cranny above, shone directly on the lock they sought." "Oh, transport!" says Isabella, and makes her escape through the vaults. In the tale of Miss Lee, when Leicester and Matilda are left in a dark den by Williams,² Matilda implores Leicester to strangle her and save her from dishonour. At that moment a peal of thunder shakes the ruins to their foundation; the dungeon is illuminated by lightning, and Matilda suddenly utters a cry of delight. The light had revealed a communication which led to the Abbey directly from the cell where they were confined. They descended into the vaults and made their escape.

From the various points of resemblance between the two works, there seems but little doubt that *The Castle of Otranto* was the inspiration, as well as the source, of most of the Gothic element in *The Recess*. The properties of Walpole,

¹*The Recess, or a Tale of other Times*, 4th Ed., 1792, I, pp. 23-24.

²*Ibid.*, II, pp. 7-9

however, are used by Miss Lee merely as properties, with little artistic and imaginative conception of their use. The desire to create suspense or terror—except in the scene quoted above—is not in evidence; and even the Gothic scenes in *The Recess* have about them a prosy air. More than twenty years had elapsed since *Longsword*, a real historical novel, was written; *Reginald Du Bray* on its appearance did not attract much notice; Miss Lee, with her rationalized medievalism, definitely raised the type to a plane of recognized respectability. Her popularity attracted other writers. From now onwards historical tales begin to appear in quick succession. It is significant from our point of view that the inspiring source of Miss Lee was *The Castle of Otranto*. The novel dealt with next reveals traces of both writers.

In 1786 was published *St. Bernard's Priory, An Old English Tale*. The title-page informs us that it was "the first Literary Production of a Young Lady." We may assume from the utter lack of merit, and the absence of any name of literary importance in the list of subscribers, that it was the work of an average unpretentious female. The fact that the first attempt should have taken the form of a historical novel assumes some importance as evidence of a change of fashion.

St. Bernard's Priory is a story of the latter period of King Henry II's reign. Lords Raby, De Courcy and Manford, with their sons and daughters are the actors in the novel; love at cross purposes is the theme. In the course of development the reader is carried from England to Wales, Cyprus and Palestine. King Richard, with a daughter by the name of Zoraide, the fruit of a Saracen marriage, is introduced in the book. "Artless her manners," and with "a heart that knew no guile,"¹ Zoraide is probably the first sketch of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*. A tournament, a hermit, drawbridges and gates, "embowering woods," with rocks, caverns, caves, and trap-doors are here. But with all these properties *St. Bernard's Priory* is a poor performance. There is less historical colouring in the story than even in *The Castle of Otranto*. The construction is faulty, the English is faulty, and the coincidences are unbelievable.

¹*St. Bernard's Priory, an Old English Tale*, 1786, p. 60.

In spite of the writer's statement in the introduction that the story is not borrowed from any author, *The Recess* certainly, and *The Castle of Otranto*, probably, have suggested some incidents in the book. The underground priory, hidden by ruins and bushes in which Elgiva, with her daughters Maud and Laura, has been living for years, is obviously suggested by the subterranean residence of Matilda and Ellinor in Miss Lee's work. In this chamber, however, is found a statue which reminds us of some of the appendages of the novel of Walpole. Passing through several passages the young Lord Raby entered a small room, "where, upon a high pedestal, arrayed in armour, a waving plume of feathers on his casque, and in his hand a pointed spear, stood the image of Lord Raby's father!—Riveted with astonishment, he gazed upon the lifeless statue, and, actuated by some unknown impulse, kneeled at the foot of the pedestal, and remained as if in silence, waiting the inspiration of Heaven! While in this posture a violent burst of thunder shook the place, and a terrible storm succeeded."¹ The supernatural, except in one dream, is still absent in *St. Bernard's Priory*, but the above incidents are reminiscent of the mighty casque with waving plumes, the statue of Alfonso and the thunder and lightning in Walpole's novel. One is tempted to see another resemblance. Zoraide one day goes to the tomb of her mother in a cathedral in Cyprus; there she accidentally meets her former lover Raby; her husband also arrives on the scene; and in the fight that ensues she is stabbed to death. In *The Castle of Otranto* also, Matilda was stabbed by Manfred at the tomb of Alfonso in the church of St. Nicholas, where she had accidentally met her lover Theodore.

With all its faults, however, the novel has some importance historically. The author makes a definite attempt to arouse sensations of fear. In the very beginning of the story when Lord Raby is exploring the ruins of the priory, a door flies open with the noise of thunder and reveals a dark, narrow passage. A lady mysteriously appears and gives a warning of approaching danger. But the author possesses no

¹*St. Bernard's Priory, an Old English Tale*, 1786, pp. 11-12.

power of suggestion. Phantoms which are supposed to be freezing the blood of some of the characters in the novel stand out in clear hard outlines. The reader is left unaffected when he reads that "a cold chill invaded every vein" of Lord Manston. It is, however, the desire to create this shiver which is significant. Secondly, we notice in *St. Bernard's Priory*, a dramatic use of elemental nature to intensify the mental attitudes of the characters, a use of which we find an earlier instance in *The Hermitage*. When Edmund, the son of Lord Manford, sets out in search of Raby's sister Laura, the author writes, "It was now dark, and the big clouds portended the heavy gathering storm. The winds whistled through the vaulted ruins, while the rattling thunder shook them to the centre. Edmund, though borne down by grief, was yet a stranger to the sensation of fear."

Much better than *St. Bernard's Priory* is a novel by Miss Fuller, called *Alan Fitz-Osborne, An Historical Tale*, published in 1787. The reign of Henry III is the period of action. Walter Fitz-Osborne, the villain and the usurper of the piece, falls in love with Matilda, the wife of his elder brother Earl Alan. Poisoning the Earl's ear, in chimerical fashion, with false suspicions, and wishing to remove him out of his way, Walter influences the King to despatch Alan to the Holy Wars. Matilda, however, remains true to her husband, and is finally stabbed to death by Walter in a fit of rage. When the rumour of the Earl's death reaches England, the young Alan is deprived of his patrimony on fabricated grounds of illegitimacy. The rest of the story depicts the gradual rise of Alan through the mazes of the baronial wars, and the final restoration of estates and family honours to their rightful owner. The earl also is in the end found alive under the disguise of a hermit near Joppa. Joppa and the hermit remind one of *The Castle of Otranto*.

Alan Fitz-Osborne, on the whole, except in one doubtful incident, shows no direct influence of Walpole's novel, but is significant, nevertheless, for two things—its use of the supernatural and its Shakespearean inspiration. The style of the book is Ossianic, with echoes from *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*—"His death merited more approbation than his

life;"¹ "in my orisons thou shalt be remembered,"² etc. The plot itself owes much to the three tragedies; jealousy is here the root of all troubles; while *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are the source of the "pale, ghastly, and bloody" apparition of Matilda, which haunts Walter. In tracing the rise of "The School of Walpole," the debt to Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists must not be overlooked.³ The treatment of the supernatural particularly reveals this influence.

The appearance of ghosts and visions on the stage had been justified by even the rational Augustans. The opinion of Voltaire on the subject, expressed in a discussion of Corneille's *Medea* and quoted by *The Monthly*, is an interesting revelation of the contemporary attitude of mind. "A sorceress doth not seem a proper object for a regular tragedy, among a people of improved taste. It may, indeed, be asked, 'why we should reject magicians, when we not only permit tragic characters to speak of ghosts and phantoms, but even suffer them sometimes to appear upon the stage?' There are certainly no more ghosts than wizards in the world, and if theatrical representations are to be confined strictly to truth, magic and apparitions should be banished the stage together.' A reason, however, I conceive might be given, why we admit of the apparition of a person deceased, and not of the operations of magic. It is possible, at least, that the Deity should, for extraordinary providential purposes, permit the appearance of ghosts; but it is not possible for magicians to possess the power of violating the eternal laws of that providence. A miracle, effected by the hand of heaven itself, hath nothing in it absurd; but a miracle, effected by a sorcerer, in direct opposition to heaven, can only entertain the lowest of the populace."⁴

If we consider the use of the supernatural in *The Castle of*

¹Alan Fitz-Osborne, *an Historical Tale*, 1787, II, p. 133.

²*Ibid.*, II, p. 145.

³It is interesting to note that in the decade 1778-1788 there also seems to have been a revival of interest in Elizabethan drama. Ashley H. Thorndike in his book on *Tragedy* (1908, p. 322) gives a list of thirteen plays which were revived 'in these years. That fifteen of Shakespeare's plays were acted on the London stages in the year 1773 alone, is sufficient evidence of Shakespeare's popularity; cf. D. Nichol Smith's *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (1928, pp. 25-6).

⁴Quoted from *The Monthly's* review of Voltaire's *Commentaries on the Works of Corneille*, 1764, Vol. XXX, pp. 534-35.

Otranto, we see that, in spite of all its absurdity, it is used to fulfil the divine will, to terrify the evil-doers, to strengthen the wavering righteous. Walpole wished to combine the marvellous of ancient story with the modern of contemporary fiction, but in the motivation of his marvellous he was certainly influenced by the spirit of the times, and, to some extent, by Shakespeare. It will be seen that, apart from the desire to create fear or the attempt at historical colouring, whenever the supernatural is introduced in the novels up to the end of the century, its function is always to carry out "extraordinary providential purposes." It is to the credit of Walpole that he introduced into fiction the tradition of the stage. The supernatural was utilized in *The Hermitage* as a religious rather than an artistic implement; in *The Champion of Virtue* it had been used too diffidently; *Alan Fitz-Osborne* is the first novel after *The Castle of Otranto*, in which it becomes a serious part of the work. Though Miss Fuller's sources of her material are the plays of Shakespeare, she is carrying on the influence of Walpole a step further.

The Castle of Otranto, possibly, may even claim to have given a suggestion or two. "See those hands, O God," says Alice, the nurse of young Alan, extending his hands on his mother's grave, "make them the instruments of retribution, intrust them with the sword of justice . . ." "At that instant, a sudden gleam of light shot across the grave. The trees shook with violence, though the air remained calm and unagitated."¹ When the phantom of Matilda visits her murderer, "The fire of indignation shot from her eyes;—she drew forth the dagger from her bosom, and holding it over the head of Walter, cried in a terrible and menacing voice—'Behold thy fate!' At the same instant some drops of blood seemed to fall from the blade upon his breast."² The gleam of light, the violent shaking of the trees, and the drops of blood, are reminiscent of Walpole. But in spite of the advance in the use of the supernatural, *Alan Fitz-Osborne* is lacking in really Gothic inspiration. Dungeons, castles, tournaments are simply mentioned unadorned. There is no desire to capture the spirit of the times.

¹*Alan Fitz-Osborne*, 1787 I, pp. 60–61

²*Ibid*, I, pp. 98–99.

In the year 1788, two historical tales are available. The first, *Heloise: or, The Siege of Rhodes, A Legendary Tale*, by George Monck Berkeley, is a tasteless, dull and quite improbable story, based on the usual materials. Banditti, the hermit, the Eastern beauty Selima, Algerian corsairs and the crusade all find a place in it. No traces of Walpole's novel are perceptible, nor does the book make any noteworthy contribution historically. But the other tale—*The Castle of Mowbray, an English Romance*, by the author of *St. Bernard's Priory*—though not exceeding *Heloise* in literary merit, definitely reveals the influence of *The Castle of Otranto*.

It is a tale of the civil wars in the reign of Stephen. Earl Mowbray, who is reputed to be dead, has left behind him a daughter named Elwina. Much to her discomfort, Elwina is sought after by King Edward, Lord Audley, and Lord Percy at the same time. Lord Fitz-Alwyn and his son Edric, the hereditary enemies of the Mowbray family, are another source of distress. The story of Bruce and his wife Margaret is connected with the other by the flimsy bond that Elgiva, Margaret's sister, later becomes the wife of Edward. Everything terminates happily for Elwina, although in the end Bruce and his consort both die, the latter having unconsciously become an adulteress.

The Castle of Mowbray, in spite of its lack of interest, suspense, and historical colouring is an advance on *St. Bernard's Priory*. Endeavouring to create mystery, the author ventures farther. When Elwina comes to Mowbray Castle, she is allotted apartments which are supposed to be haunted by the ghost of the earl. There is a picture in her room which affects her strangely, she knows not why; near the picture stands a statue. And here an incident occurs which is obviously suggested by the picture of Manfred's grandfather quitting its panel in Walpole's novel. One day when Lord Edric forcibly seized Elwina to carry her away, "a tremendous noise assailed their ears, but like a wretch transfixed appeared the abandoned Edric, when from its pedestal descended the statue of earl Mowbray, the same that had caused Elwina's emotion."¹ Just as Manfred was

¹*The Castle of Mowbray, an English Romance*, 1788, p. 16.

beckoned by the portrait of his ancestor to proceed after it, a voice from the moving statue bids Elwina follow. "It then lifted up a large picture, and taking the hand of Elwina, led her through some dark passages into a wood at the back of the castle."¹ The author gives a crude explanation of this miracle by informing the reader that the father of Elwina was alive, and that he himself was standing in front of the statue, when Edric caused the rude interference. This is one instance more of the rationalizing forces playing on *The Castle of Otranto*. The author of *The Castle of Mowbray* also makes use of prognostications in the style of Walpole. "Full of the ancient prophecies, which foretold that a prince of their country should ride crowned through London, Llewellyn held in idea Edward conquered, and all England at his disposal."² The prediction comes true when the severed head of Llewellyn is paraded through the streets of London. Here we have the tentative, ineffective use of what was to be handled later with exquisite art in *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *Anne of Geierstein*.

To summarize briefly, we see how intimately *The Castle of Otranto* was connected with the so-called historical tales discussed above. The name of Horace Walpole was definitely allied with the new type of novel even in the opinion of the contemporary critics. On this score the evidence of the reviews is of inestimable value. *The Critical* said in a notice of *The Castle of Mowbray*, in 1788, "The Heroic novel, where characters are taken from real life, is a pleasing kind of composition; but it is the bow of Ulysses and requires strength as well as address to bend it. Our author possesses neither. He has mutilated history, is unacquainted with the human heart, and deficient in judgment; yet with these defects, he enters the lists as the rival of Horace Walpole and Miss Lee."³ The lack of distinction between the two last mentioned writers is important. Still better testimony of the alliance of *The Castle of Otranto* with the new type of fiction is afforded by *The Monthly* the same year in a review of *The Apparition*, a novel of which, unfortunately, no copy

¹*The Castle of Mowbray, an English Romance*, p. 17.

³*The Critical*, LXVI, 577.

²*Ibid.*, p. 152.

is available. "A simple yet agreeable story," was the critic's comment on it; "The writer is evidently of the Walpolian school. The 'broad hand' which was seen on the stair-case, as described in the *Castle of Otranto*, is no doubt in the memory of several of our Readers. The visits of the *Apparition* remind us of this and some other circumstances of that admired Romance. But the pupil is at many removes behind the master."¹

Four and twenty years after its publication Walpole's novel is still vitally alive. The author of the "very curious performance," as *The Castle of Otranto* was called in 1764; "the advocate," in the words of *The Monthly* in 1765, "for re-establishing the barbarous superstitions of Gothic devilism," has, by 1788, become in the eyes of the same review, the founder of a "school." One may wonder what led critics to group works of such different natures as *The Recess* and *The Castle of Otranto* together, and what precisely they meant by "the school of Walpole." The basis of classification of the novels, it seems, was not the historical or the terror element. No rigid distinction was made between the "historic" and the "heroic" romances. The point of affinity in the works was the element called Gothic. The castle was gothic; terror and superstition were gothic; chivalry and the Middle Ages were gothic; so partially was even the age of Elizabeth; and at the head of everything gothic, with his ghost story and the house at Strawberry, stood Horace Walpole. Contemporary recognition of Walpole as the inaugurator of a type is the best tribute to his importance and to the dominating influence of *The Castle of Otranto*. The nomenclature of the reviewer in speaking of "the Walpolian school" was not merely the result of a critic's desire to docket works under heads, but had, as is evident from the foregoing pages, a basis in fact.

In estimating the general character of the half-a-dozen novels mentioned in this section, the terminology of *The Critical*, in speaking of the "historic" and "heroic" types, marks with reasonable clarity the two lines of development. Persons and incidents from the pages of history are stressed

¹*The Monthly*, LXXIX, 466.

in the one, while in the second, the object of the authors is primarily to write stories of medieval life. The title of "historical tales," however, was indefinitely claimed by both. To the first class belong *The Recess* and *Alan Fitz-Osborne*. But in spite of the element of history in them, an element which is their only claim to being called historical novels, the works of Miss Lee, and to some extent even Miss Fuller, are merely glorified tales of contemporary domestic life, played with a vague medieval background. The compromise of Miss Reeve strikes the key in which they are pitched.

The authors of the second group, on the other hand, neglect history but emphasize a hermit, a tournament, an Eastern beauty, a crusade, and a castle. They think that the introduction of these ingredients into their tales—the Oriental damsel is the only addition made to the menu of Walpole—inevitably stamps them as works dealing with the dark ages, and thus indirectly as historical novels. They are considered historical, not because there is any history in them, but because they treat of days gone by, the legitimate domain of history. To this class belong *Reginald Du Bray*, *St. Bernard's Priory*, *Helouse, or the Siege of Rhodes*, and *The Castle of Mowbray*. Not one author makes a conscious effort to base his tale on antiquarian research. There is no conception of accuracy; hardly any notion of the days of which they are writing. These novels are the result of a movement towards freedom, the embodiment of a love for the gilded past, and lack any substantial background. The authors resort to the medieval in a general, indeterminate manner. Their pictures are more the realization of their day-dreams than the result of deep study and scholarship. The standard of medieval colour is *The Castle of Otranto*; it is the repository for everything Gothic; and the properties of Walpole are supposed to exhaust all the requisites for adhering to medieval "costume." No striking advance on his novel is made. In all the four tales there is less faithfulness to the times and less of the medieval than in Walpole's story which, in spite of the eccentricity of its marvellous element, possessed some negative merit. There was nothing in it which could arouse glaringly contemporary associations.

Walpole said in a letter to Dr. Warton that he was ambitious of "copying the manners of an age which you love."¹ In the description of the cavalcade entering Otranto castle, there is even an antiquarian flavour, a realistic touch. With the possible exception of *Reginald Du Bray*, the remaining works are deficient in the spirit of Walpole.

The distinction between the historic and heroic groups, on the whole, is by no means clearly marked. The former type did not confine itself to historical facts. We find the underground machinery in *The Recess* and the supernatural in *Alan Fitz-Osborne*. The properties of Walpole are absorbed even into these novels. The two classes definitely overlap. And in so far as the phrase, "school of Walpole," combines in itself both the types, it is better adapted to, and more descriptive of these tales than their appellation of "historical novels."

But it is possible to perceive in this vague, characterless fiction two significant facts—first, the establishment of the Gothic castle with its attendant vaults, monastery or convent, and underground galleries; and secondly, the close association of the element of terror with Gothic architecture. Except *Heloise*, the other five novels have some scene or other in which a definite attempt to create a sense of fear is made. It may be evoked by the general atmosphere as in *Reginald Du Bray*; by suspense as in the underground recess in *Miss Lee*; by astonishing and mysterious events as in *St. Bernard's Priory*; by supernatural visitations as in *Alan Fitz-Osborne*, or by the explained supernatural as in *The Castle of Mowbray*—the element is invariably present. It ought again to be mentioned that the primary object of the authors is to write medieval tales. Their interest is in the characters, the atmosphere, the morals, or in the facts of history. The ingredient of fear creeps in only as a by-product because of the union of Gothic with gloom.

Writing in *The British Review* for February 1818, Charles Robert Maturin said, "The transition from the vapid sentimentality of the novel of fifty years ago to the goblin horrors of the last twenty is so strong and sudden that it almost

¹*Letters*, VI, 198-9, March 16, 1765.

puzzles us to find a connecting link."¹ Maturin's chronology is vague, but one can understand his meaning. He was perplexed by the change in the character of fiction between 1768 and 1798, the change from the Richardson and Fielding type to the work of Mrs. Radcliffe's and Lewis's followers. The novels we have been considering, and those discussed in the last section—*The Ring*, *Rosa de Montmorien*, *Emmeline* and others—supply the necessary "connecting link." The decade 1778–88 has been one of transitional indefiniteness. Neither the tale of "goblin horrors," nor the real historical novel has yet evolved, but we have here the first experiments which in course of time result in those two forms. This period may be said to be the height of the *direct* influence of *The Castle of Otranto*. Now onwards we pass into regions in which evolution takes its normal course of development. The ripples continue to move in expanding circles, but we are getting farther and farther from the pebble that caused their motion. *The Castle of Otranto* does not cease to be a creative force for yet another decade. As might, however, be expected its direct influence is on the decline, although the manifestations of it assume more important shape. In the next ten years, it is not *The Castle of Otranto* which is the centre of attention, but the efforts of individual genius which carry further the disintegration of *The Castle of Otranto*, of which we see the first signs in these years, and which develop the various suggestions of Walpole into types.

¹*The British Review*, XI, 46.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVOLUTION OF "THE TALE OF TERROR"

1789-94

I

IN the last chapter we traced the growth of "The School of Walpole," of the vague tales of mediæval life, of the so-called historical fiction. It was also pointed out that nearly all the works dealt with were deficient in the spirit of Walpole. The past had a strong appeal for the authors, but the scholarly desire to create a living picture of days gone by was not particularly in evidence. Before proceeding to a consideration of the Tale of Terror—the chief evolution of the years 1789-94—it would be desirable to maintain the continuity and carry the survey of the Walpolean School a step further. It may be stated at the outset that *The Castle of Otranto*, henceforward, does not play any direct part in the growth of the mediæval tale; but, since Walpole is responsible for the paternity of the historical novel, and since his name is so definitely associated with its rise in the previous decade, this study would be incomplete without a consideration of the later developments of this phase, especially as some of these developments bring us nearer to the spirit of *The Castle of Otranto*.

When Horace Walpole wrote his famous story, his aim was to adhere as closely as possible to Gothic days and Gothic manners; his antiquarian interests have even left their mark in a realistic detail or two about the knights and their procession. The author also wished "to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern;" but his real object was not so much to introduce eighteenth-century customs, or manners, or ideas into the book, as to adopt

eighteenth-century methods of characterization. Walpole's ideal was to write a tale of chivalry, the characters of which should, at the same time, be individuals true to life. He has certainly failed in his endeavour, but the spirit actuating the attempt deserves commendation. Clara Reeve, on the other hand, took the statement of Walpole more literally; by modern she really meant contemporary life. Her interpretation, and its resultant tone, persisted in this type of novel for a long time. The most significant advance in historical fiction, in the years under consideration, is the gradual exclusion and elimination of the heterogenous modern element in the sense in which Miss Reeve understood it. And the process of purification begins with the rise of a positive antiquarian attitude. The present chapter has been entitled "The Evolution of The Tale of Terror" to denominate the most striking production of the period, and the date, 1794, has been fixed to indicate a landmark of that phase. In the historical novel, however, the date does not hold good with the same definiteness. The boundaries of this section will, accordingly, be slightly extended, and 1797 will be made its terminating point. The year has been chosen because by that time we notice the emergence of an attitude analogous to that of Walpole. The refinement of the historical novel by then reaches a stage which brings us back to the spirit of the inspiring force.

Turning to individual works in the years 1789-97, one is at first puzzled by the lack of any distinct lines of development. No traits or types are clearly marked. If we take the outstanding characteristic of each book as the basis of classification, the novels then, broadly, fall into three sections—first the vague, general tales, resembling those of the last chapter, with some minor modifications, the result of changing times, or the reflection of leading contemporary fashions in literature; secondly, novels with a propagandist and moralistic tendency, stressing famous individuals or historical facts; and lastly, stories stamped with the antiquarian temper emphasizing manners—novels nearest allied to Walpole.

The first book in the general section which claims our

attention is *The Statue Room, an Historical Tale*, by Miss Rossetta Ballin, published in 1790. *The Recess* is obviously the author's model; the heroine of the tale is an unacknowledged daughter of Henry VIII and her adventures are the theme. The novel is a plain, straightforward, unimaginative, lifeless narration. The statue room which gives the title to the story was so called from its being lined with statues. It plays scarcely any part in the book and does not make its appearance till towards the very end. A mysterious sigh is heard, and the innumerable underground passages here afford one more instance of the establishment of their fashion in Gothic fiction. A novel entitled *Gabrielle De Vergy, an Historical Tale*, which appeared the same year, has slightly more colour. A twenty-five page discourse on chivalry forms the preface to a story of the twelfth century. The scene is laid in a castle in France. A priory, a hermitage, a tournament, Holy Wars, and King Richard are introduced into the tale, while there is a profusion of prophetic dreams and depressing omens. The unique incident in the book is the death of the heroine who breathes her last kissing the heart of her lover which has been served up to her in an urn. To the same type belongs *The Siege of Belgrade, An Historical Novel* (1791). Instead of England or France, the scene shifts to Russia, and the author makes a tentative effort to depict the customs of the country. A long note on the Russian marriage ceremony finds a place in the tale. Veda, the heroine, is the adopted daughter of Empress Catherine, but she discovers her real father in the shape of a hermit in a cave; she also finds a brother who is identified by a crimson stain resembling the figure of a sceptre on his hand. An addition too is made to the novelist's list of properties. "A large piece of sapless rind was separated from the trunk" of a huge elm to provide a secret hiding-place. Both *The Siege of Belgrade* and *Gabrielle De Vergy* are historical novels dealing with scenes outside England. The expansive movement which resulted in the popularity of medieval tales in the decade 1778-88 still continues. The spirit of man was unfolding its wings and making longer and longer imaginative flights. Distant ages had already

attracted; distant climes were casting their glamour now.¹

William Wallace; or, The Highland Hero, A Tale, Founded on Historical Facts, by Henry Siddons, published in 1791, is another illustration of this phase. There are no subterranean passages and there is no supernatural in the book, apart from a prophecy and an omen. But it is a simple story of bravery and heroism, told occasionally with some spirit. A childish naiveté characterizes these novels. Not only is scholarly effort absent, but imagination runs riot. Commonsense had had its reign long enough; fetters are being cast aside, and there is the exuberance of joy in new-found freedom. Foreign lands had been made the theatre of heroic tales of love and marvellous adventure; the Middle Ages also had been fairly threshed; the Baronial Wars, the reigns of Henry VII and Queen Elizabeth, had been made the scene of action of many a novel; in *Arville Castle, An Historical Romance* (1795), the author chooses for his theme "the first century, when Boadicea headed a considerable army against the Romans, commanded by the General Suetonius."² As far as historical colouring or truth is concerned, it is violated in the very beginning of the book. The Baroness Arville, and her daughters, bemoan their fate because, used to refined and cultured pleasures of educated minds, they had no books to while away the leaden-footed hours of their captivity!

The "terrible" school had become established by the time *Arville Castle* was written. Mrs. Radcliffe was at the height of her fame. The atrocities of Dunstan, the Robber King in the story, cater to the demand of the moment. The novel not only shows the influence of Mrs. Radcliffe, but gives indication also of the causes which led to the downfall of the School of Terror. Suspense and mystery and the mere thrill of fear

¹Myra Reynolds, in her *Treatment of Nature in English Poetry* (1896), gives some interesting figures of travel books published in the eighteenth century. In a list of 360 works, culled from Pinkerton's *Catalogue of Voyages and Travels* (1814), all but 84 are travels outside Great Britain and Ireland. The fact that nearly half of the accounts of travels in other countries belong to the last quarter of the century supports the statement we have made above; cf. Chapter IV, p. 193, of Myra Reynolds' work.

²*Arville Castle, an Historical Romance*, 2 Vols., 1795, I, p. 2.

are no longer enough. Violent actions, and gruesome details are introduced. Men are burnt alive. "Daggers privately fixed; chains that were insupportable; the flesh of victims suppurated, and in many incisions made in the tenderest parts on purpose to produce infectious wounds—in some limbs dislocated, and all with some horrid pang, produced by means unnatural and abominable"¹—such are the horrors inflicted on the captives in the robber's Gothic mansion. *Arville Castle* appeared the same year as *The Monk*. The haunted castle and 'the terrible' were so much the rage that even writers who set out with the obvious intention of writing historical novels—whether about the first century or the fifteenth—failed not to catch the prevailing epidemic.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the name of Mrs. Radcliffe was associated even with these vague historical tales. In a review of *Austenburn Castle* (1796), *The Critical* made a plea for accuracy, saying, "we could wish the writers, who mingle history with fiction, would pay a little more regard to truth"; but the reviewer had opened his remarks with the sentence, "Since Mrs. Radcliffe's justly admired and successful romances, the press has teemed with stories of haunted castles and visionary terrors."² The trait which the critic noticed in *Austenburn Castle* is to be met with in the majority of these later productions. These works are neither terror tales nor historical tales—or rather they are both.

Still better evidence of Mrs. Radcliffe's influence on this type is afforded by *The Duke of Clarence*, written by E.M.F., in 1795. The story opens in 1422 after the death of Henry V; the usual wars in France are introduced to give the hero, Edgar, an opportunity to emerge to the forefront. The only historical colour is the blowing of a horn. Otherwise the author's aim is to paint a picture of lives regulated according to "the noblest of sciences, that of Ethics." Reginald De Clifford, the Baroness, and their daughter Elfrida, lead a life of exquisite sensibility, exactly in the manner of Emily and St. Aubert and his wife in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The

¹*Arville Castle, an Historical Romance*, 2 Vols., 1795, II, pp. 39-40.

²*The Critical*, 2nd S, XVI, 222

novel is a combination of Mrs. Radcliffe and Miss Lee. A castle with a reputation of being haunted; the usual dungeons, trap-doors, ghosts; the constant harping on the strings of pathos; lowly pilgrims who moralize; artificial behaviour of the heroines who play and paint and draw, and who conscientiously make "a strict examination of the state of their hearts"; gloomy tyrants, dissolute monks; heroes, tender and beautiful, who are softly masculine without being feminine; faithful servants and family portraits—these form the stuff of the novel. The book may be taken as typical of the vague historical tales after 1794. These novels are the least important development of "The School of Walpole," and their only value lies in their characterless, supple, plastic nature which makes them indicators of literary tendencies. But they take us far, very far, from *The Castle of Otranto*.

Before passing to a consideration of the manifestations of the antiquarian spirit, an intermediate stage ought to be mentioned. It is the yoking of the historical novel in the service of morality. A belated Augustan found another opportunity to try her improving, correcting hand on the *genre*. The writer was Clara Reeve. In the same group we may place Mrs. Anne Maria Mackenzie, who, though not concerned primarily with edification, illustrates the attraction of a rational mind to the historical type as a rational form of fiction.

In 1793 appeared *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, the Natural Son of Edward Prince of Wales, commonly called The Black Prince; with anecdotes of many other eminent persons of the Fourteenth Century*, by Clara Reeve.¹ The author intended to give a picture of the manners of the age of Edward III; but the attempt is marred, first, by the author's theories, and secondly, by her lack of imagination.

Three motives seem to have actuated Miss Reeve to write the *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*. The attitude of mind which resulted in *The Old English Baron* is noticeable also here. "Many attempts have been made of late years to build fictitious stories upon historical names and charac-

¹Miss Reeve also wrote a ghost story entitled *Castle Conner* in 1787. The author informs us in a preface to *The Exiles* in 1788 that the novel was lost in transit

ters," said the author in her preface; "the foundations were bad, and the structures have fallen down."¹ And therefore, to rectify the error she wrote the *Memoirs*. Miss Reeve's was not a creative imagination but a critical one. Given a suggestion, she could pitch on its faults, point out the scope for improvement, and then try to serve the cause of morality by an attempt to illustrate her point. "To falsify historical facts and characters," Miss Reeve said, "is a kind of sacrilege against those great names upon which history has affixed the seal of truth. The consequences are mischievous; it misleads young minds eager in the search of truth, and enthusiasts in the pursuit of those virtues which are the objects of their admiration, upon whom one true character has more effect than a thousand fictions."² Combined with this was the ideal of positive good. "The virtues of these illustrious men [the great men of the past] are to me a mirror, by which I learn to regulate my own life,"³ states the author. Finally, the levelling principle which France had set in fashion, appeared to Clara Reeve only in the light of a principle of anarchy, and she wished to give "a faithful picture of a well-governed kingdom."⁴

With all these ulterior motives, *Sir Roger* has absolutely no fourteenth-century atmosphere. Dry facts of history are stressed in an unimaginative manner; the characters lead moral, virtuous, domestic lives; and the tone of the age of Edward III is created by the introduction of only a prophetic dream. Nevertheless, Miss Reeve's desire to be accurate, even if it be merely in facts, must not be overlooked. With a certain amount of pride, the author prefixes to her work the names of authorities consulted. They include Froissart, Walsingham, Holinshed, Hall, Stow, Harding, Speed, Rapin and others. Miss Reeve's passion for accuracy was possibly the result of a moral urge to be truthful, and not of an artistic or æsthetic concept; more the product of an old maidenly horror of lies than of an antiquarian love for colour. In any case, it indicates the direction of evolution in this period.

¹*Sir Roger de Clarendon*, 1793, p. I, xx.

²*Ibid.*, I, p. vi

³*Ibid.*, I, p. xxi.

⁴*Ibid.*, I, p. xvi.

Two years later appeared *Mysteries Elucidated, A Novel*, by Anne Maria Mackenzie. The book is an instance of rationalism of a different order. While the historical novel appealed to Miss Reeve because of the greatness of its *individuals*, it attracted Mrs. Mackenzie as a type, in contrast with the ancient romance and the average realistic novel. Talking of the last two, the author says in an address to the reader, "It was thought expedient to attempt a middle kind of writing, founded too on historical facts, neither so improbable (*impossible* might sound as well) as the one, nor so dangerous and indiscriminating as the other."¹

The period of action in *Mysteries Elucidated* is fixed about 1320; the historical part of the tale is on similar lines to Marlowe's *Edward II*. The horrors of the King's death are described with a wealth of realistic detail. Round this structure of facts is woven a story on the model of Mrs. Radcliffe, though with a significant difference we shall notice later. The properties and also the technique of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are adopted. Pictures, castles, dungeons, the loquacious servant (a man instead of the maid) are handled successfully to create some striking incidents. Mysterious utterances, secrets half-revealed; lights moving up and down—these are the tricks of the trade employed, tricks hailing straight from *The Castle of Otranto*. Mrs. Mackenzie does not stress historical accuracy in the sense in which Clara Reeve understood it; her rationalism takes another form. Although she profoundly admired the works of Mrs. Radcliffe, she takes objection to the mild supernatural even in that lady's novels. A statement in the prefatory address has direct importance for us.

"... I thought it a duty absolutely owing to those who may honour them [her pages] with a perusal, to avoid even the supposition of visionary figures; and though, in so doing, it may appear as an open reflection upon the many, who following the masterly hints already thrown out by their great original [a footnote informs us that the reference is to *The Castle of Otranto*], have dyed their walls in blood—given life to pictures—disturbed the inhabitants of the

¹*Mysteries Elucidated, a Novel*, 3 Vols., 1795, I, pp. ix-x.

silent grave—drag'd from his peaceful bed the airy form, to appear against the monsters who had destroyed an innocent family . . . ; yet I shall be better satisfied to escape the censure of the prudent, than to derive fame by my success, in alarming the timid."¹ The fact is worth emphasizing that while in the previous decade *The Castle of Otranto* was associated with the medieval tale and the historical romance, by 1795, the name of Walpole is allied with the ghost story and the blood-and-thunder novel.

We have considered the different types of historical tales in this period—novels related to "The School of Walpole"; stories of imaginative expansion; works of moral writers interested in eminent persons, and facts; historical romances of the Radcliffian school—but all these fall short of the aim of Walpole, and do not really advance much further the work already done. Simultaneously, however, there is also the rise of a few writers who come nearer to the ideals, and perhaps the achievement, of the author of *The Castle of Otranto*.

The first writer who may be grouped with this type is James White, a relative of the author of *The Falstaff Letters*. In 1789 he published *Earl Strongbow: or, The History of Richard de Clare and The Beautiful Griselda*. The story is carried on night after night in a conversation between the ghost of Earl Strongbow and a prisoner in Chepstow Castle, in the reign of Charles II. James White has a much better informed mind than that of his predecessors. Writing a story of the twelfth century, he makes a distinction between Normans and Saxons; the ceremony of knighthood and the ritual of a tournament are realistically described. There is no doubt that intellectually he was superior to the writers who had gone before him and occasionally shows a capacity for circumstantial delineation of the past. But his vagrant fancy made it impossible for him to write a novel with any harmony or consistency in it. The eccentricity of his genius destroys the effect he is trying to produce. One wonders at times if James White is serious or ridiculing chivalry and romance. After making a strong raid on the castle of Dinas

¹*Mysteries Elucidated, a Novel*, 3 Vols., 1795, I, pp. xiv-xv

Bran, Earl Strongbow and his companions find the chief of the mansion "underneath an inverted basket which lay in a darksome corner of the great Kitchen,"¹ and they leave him in the same basket, after tying his head and heels together with a leathern thong; Philippina de Clarivaux, a noble dame, had conceived a violent and irresistible partiality for a red beard, and her happiness depends on wedding a man in possession of that adornment; the ghost of Earl Strongbow, who is restless because the tomb of his faithful squire Otho is feeling the hand of time and crumbling to dust, is extremely fond of human scandal!

In his next novel, *The Adventures of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster* (1790), of which no copy is available, we learn from *The Monthly* that Geoffrey Chaucer plays an important part. Another story entitled *The Adventures of King Richard, Cœur-De-Lion*, by the same writer appeared in 1791. As literature, the book marks no improvement on *Earl Strongbow*. The tone of whimsical burlesque and grotesque realism continues. Lady Ursulina gives a long lecture to King Richard on the evils of swearing. But the Preface to the work is extremely interesting. It contains the first statement of principles, the first mention of an antiquarian endeavour. ". . . In a former work, I addressed thee, courteous Reader, in the character of an old antiquary . . .", says James White, referring to his *John of Gaunt*; and he is probably the first person who considers a tale about the past in the light of something more than an interesting story. He shows a scholarly desire to create a real picture of the times he is dealing with. The preface deserves to be quoted.

"And here, Reader, if thou shouldst wish to learn why I have chosen rather to pourtray the manners and the characters of ages past, in preference to those of the moderns; be it known to thee, that I consider the task of delineating the follies of the present times, as already in better hands; to wit, in the hands of that queen of novelists, the incomparable authoress of *Cecilia*. I leave, therefore, to that humorous maiden the supremacy in what are in general termed *novels*, resolving to explore the remote doings of antiquity, to *show life*, as life was, in those heroic days, and evince that our forefathers were as

¹*Earl Strongbow*, 2 Vols, 1789, II, p. 21.

foolish as we are ourselves. To this end have I addicted myself to Gothic romances; adhering (at least, I believe so) right closely to the manners and customs of early times, when chivalry and the feudal system prevailed throughout all Europe. To speak in the language of painters, 'the *costumi* have been preserved.'"¹

In the same Preface he unconsciously touches on another problem which a historical novelist had to face—namely, the ignorance of the public. "Divers, I say, have been the opinions entertained and declared concerning these my labours. The Milliners and Mantua-makers, at the circulating libraries, were fain to inquire what was chivalry; what were knights, and squires, and minstrels, and palfreys, and ushers, and tournaments, and hauberks, and morions, and lances, and the whole apparatus of chivalry? In fine, they were dissatisfied, saying 'they did not understand *them there sort of things*, and had rather have somewhat else, that *showed life*.'"²

A passage like the above is important. It indicates the necessity, before the readers can relish a historical novel, of at least some knowledge among them of the period about which they are reading. The numerous pseudo-historical tales which preceded Scott—the modern tales with a Gothic tang—created a public for the reception of his novels; and for the dissemination of some information regarding days gone by and for creating a widespread interest in them, no other form could have been so universally acceptable. Themselves the result of a desire for the new and a longing for the past, they indirectly influenced and even created that desire in their turn. It is a commonplace to state that the historical novel proper was created by Scott; but the fact is that without *The Castle of Otranto*, and the numerous productions of "The School of Walpole," there would have been no *Waverley Novels*.

The works of James White stand in a class by themselves. They are freakish, and interesting in an eccentric manner. But, in the grotesqueness and the burlesque, we occasionally have flashes of historical colouring. In any case the author

¹*The Adventures of King Richard*, 3 Vols., 1791, I, pp. xiv-xv.

²*Ibid.*, I, pp. iv-v

deserves to be remembered for his statement of ideals, though his good intentions suffered the fate of most good intentions.

The Minstrel; or, Anecdotes of Distinguished Personages in the Fifteenth Century, published in 1793, is allied to Miss Reeve's work in tone; but, side by side with this, there are also some realistic touches, a desire to be accurate and faithful. The author is cursorily led "to introduce some subjects lately much agitated [a reference to the French Revolution] and oppose opinion for opinion"; long discourses on systems of government are introduced in a story of the wars of York and Lancaster. Emphasis is laid on the facts of history and on characters, and the title of the novel gives a good idea of its contents. The historical plays of Shakespeare and the work of Mrs. Radcliffe have left their mark on the book. In some incidents, at the same time, the author tries to create a medieval atmosphere. The ladies are attired in "fine white rochets," and men are armed with "bacinets"; the bard's dress is graphically described; an old writer is quoted on the diversion at the bear-garden in Southwark; Eleanor, the distressed heroine garbed as a minstrel, is taken round the cathedrals and tombs in London, and the legends and ceremonies connected with each are related; "a travelling vendor of pardons and indulgences from the pope" affords an opportunity for some humorous by-play, a rare thing in a Gothic novel; and there is a realistic touch in the description of the cottages of the "villaines" and yeomanry of the time.

This detached information, however, is not fused into the tale; and the novel, on the whole, has an affinity with the work of Miss Reeve and Miss Lee. But these occasional touches are certainly an advance. In 1795 the author wrote another story with the ambitious title, *The Cypriots; or A Miniature of Europe in the Middle of the Fifteenth Century*, but again the book is not available.

In 1797 appeared *The Knights; or Sketches of the Heroic Age*, a work which brings us to another stage in the growth of the historical novel, and with which we may end this section. There is nothing supernatural in the book, and

towards the end the story dwindles into an ordinary terror-novel. The influence of Mrs. Radcliffe is specially noticeable in the vicissitudes of the heroine Leofrida. Romantic castles, galleries, hair-breadth escapes, gloomy tyrants are repeated, but with all these repetitions, *The Knights* is the best attempt at consistent medievalism which has appeared so far. It is a definitely scholarly venture. The author supports her statements with extensive quotations from Dr. Robertson's *Reign of Charles V*, and Lord Lyttelton's *Reign of Henry II*, on the institution of chivalry; Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Lord Lyttelton's work are cited on minute details of armour and on "*judicial combat*"; there is a reference also to Monsieur de St. Palaye; and two long essays, containing a short sketch of the manners of knight-hood, and a description of a tournament "from a work by the celebrated Dr. Henry," are appended to the book.

The time of the second Crusade in the twelfth century is the period of action. There is more picturesque detail in the story than in any work hitherto discussed. Communication with the imprisoned Leofrida is established in a quaint manner. "In a few minutes a small light shaft sprung with whizzing flight through the casement, and alighted on the floor . . . it was a thin wand of polished yew, crested with a barbed head of silver."¹ In the description of the valiant foresters who are proud that they are not merely base banditti we are reminded of the famous band of Scott.

The preface, covering about twenty pages, is of interest as affording a good example of the rise of the scholarly attitude. The author does not bring forth any virtuous arguments in justification of her attempt. She holds no brief on behalf of morality. Her desire is only "to give to those who chuse not to collect an idea of it [chivalry] from the annals of history, a slight sketch of that memorable order of knight-hood on which the ancient Romances founded the chief basis of their fascinating fictions;"² and she modestly says that her story "presumes not to call itself a *picture* of chivalry,"³ for she is "conscious of the difficulties which

¹*The Knights, or Sketches of the Heroic Age a Romance*, 3 Vols, 1797, I, p. 82.

²*Ibid.*, I, p. xix.

³*Ibid.*, I, p. xix.

attend a strict regard to *costume*.”¹ At the same time the author makes the important statement that “she has tried to avoid the censure of giving a modern character to a work which treats of ages past.”² It is this spirit which produced *Ivanhoe* and *Anne of Geierstein*. If the author of *The Knights* failed it is not because she started with a wrong artistic theory; it is because she lacked the knowledge, information, and also the talent required to put her ideals into successful execution.

The wheel set in motion by Walpole has come full circle; the influence of *The Castle of Otranto* on the historical novel may be said to have reached its final landmark. He himself was not inspired to write his medieval tale, because it appeared to him a fit medium of instruction; and he certainly had an antiquarian ideal. The efforts of Miss Reeve and even Mrs. Mackenzie were to some extent perversions of Walpole caused by the rationalistic age. Their ulterior motives were foreign to the nature of the stimulating force. By the time the century turned, the ideal of artistic purity and verisimilitude, the desire and the principle underlying *The Castle of Otranto*—a Gothic story for the sake of the Gothic story, an unadulterated medieval tale purporting to transport the reader to the life of ages gone by—this artistic concept, antiquarian on the positive side, and negative in so far as it intended to exclude everything modern, a fact for the first time grasped by the author of *The Knights*, has come into existence. This, in a sense, is the shifting of stress from men to manners. Clara Reeve, the author of *The Minstrel*, and Mrs. Mackenzie were more interested in the former; James White was the first writer after Walpole to lay emphasis on the latter, but his eccentricity prevented him from adhering seriously to his object; *The Knights* is the only work so far in which any sort of success in the attainment of the second goal is achieved. The days when Sir Walter Scott was to start writing his medieval poems are at hand. Nathan Drake has risen as the protagonist of the Gothic School. Force of circumstances, a pecuniary pinch, and the genius of Scott gave

¹*The Knights, or Sketches of the Heroic Age: a Romance*, 3 Vols., 1797, I, p. xxiv.

²*Ibid.*, I, p. xxiii.

the finishing touch to the spirit of which we perceive the stirrings in *The Knights*. The author, disapproving of the "absurd alliance of History and Fiction," has based her novel on purely fictitious events, but, in spite of this, the attitude of mind that inspired the work is the real point of importance. It may well be questioned whether the works of Scott attained their popularity because of the historical facts in them, or because of the picture they contain of the manners and life of the days in which the story is enacted. In passing it may also be mentioned that the properties which Walpole set in fashion—a Gothic castle, with subterranean passages and gloom—have definitely established themselves as the setting of every tale of chivalry.

One possible explanation of the lack of realism in most of the novels we have considered may be given. To paint the picture of an extinct society, extensive knowledge based on special research is necessary. Something more than vague details, and general information is required to make it palpitate with life. A sentence in the advertisement to Joseph Strutt's *Queenhoo-Hall, A Romance*, gives the clue to the secret of creation. Speaking of Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, the advertisement says, "... Those who undervalue the labour and skill necessary to select the materials of such a composition, are little aware, how much more the fire of genius is kindled and excited by a single circumstance of minute and picturesque reality, than by an hundred elegant, round, and polished periods, in which events are generally narrated, without a tittle to mark whether they happened in Britain or Palestine."¹ When the historical tales came to be written in the eighties, the knowledge needed to produce "circumstance[s] of minute and picturesque reality" was lacking. Attention had been given to the origins of romance; vague, general descriptions of chivalry and feudal times had appeared in the histories of Lyttelton, Gibbon, Robertson, and others; and these only were the sources within easy reach of the average author. Simultaneously with the rise of the medieval tale, however, scholarly research also was making rapid strides in the last

¹*Queenhoo-Hall, a Romance*, 4 Vols., Edin., 1808, I, p. 11.

quarter of the century. The work of Grose, Gough, and Hearne appeared in these years.¹ But so long as this special knowledge was not acquired, and so long as it was confined to the professional antiquaries instead of being disseminated, the real historical novel could not have come into life.

By the end of the century, not only a mass of antiquarian work has been done, but the antiquarian artistic temper also shows signs in fiction. "The School of Walpole" has undergone a transformation and the real historical novel is in sight. History has been emphasized; historical individuals have also been made the centre of attention; the antiquarian spirit of which there was a touch in Walpole—the ideal of the exclusion of anything definitely modern, the best artistic qualification of *The Castle of Otranto*—that too has by 1797 come into existence. And Sir Walter Scott is only a fusion of and an evolution out of these different phases. Miss Lee, Joseph Strutt, and *The Castle of Otranto* combined give us *The Waverley Novels*. Walpole's story was a definite source of inspiration to the Wizard of the North. That the statements made are no exaggeration will become evident from the opinions (which will be quoted later in this survey) expressed on *The Castle of Otranto* by Sir Walter Scott.

With these remarks we may end the present section and pass to a consideration of the type which was most prominent in the eyes of the public as well as of the critics in the period 1789-94, a type with which Walpole came to be associated more than with the Gothic-medieval-historical romance.

II

In the third chapter we noticed that about the year 1788, historical tales of the Walpolian School had become quite popular. It was also postulated that the basic motives of the innovations which followed a discontent with the realistic

¹C. L. Eastlake in his *History of the Gothic Revival* (1872), gives a list of fifteen works on Gothic architecture published during the eighteenth century. It is significant that two-thirds of these belong to the last twenty-five years. To illustrate that the connection we are establishing between the antiquarian works and historical fiction is not visionary, one instance may be given. In her *Bungay Castle*, Mrs. Bonhote quotes Grose's *Antiquities* on the "age of bigotry and superstition;" cf. *Bungay Castle*, 1796, II, pp. 189-90.

type of fiction were a love of chivalry and a love of mystery. A few writers, too, had risen who felt the appeal of the haunted chamber and the Gothic castle, and who faintly tried to introduce scenes of terror into their otherwise domestic novels. Even in the stories of medieval life, it was observed that authors were fumbling to excite mystery, surprise and fear. If we compare the mass of production between 1788 and 1794 a distinct change is visible. While in the beginning of this period historical novels predominate, towards the end we come across titles like *The Haunted Priory*, *The Haunted Castle*, *The Haunted Cavern*, *The Creole*, or *The Haunted Island*. This startling alteration in the course of half a dozen years was brought about by the advent of a writer of some genius. The writer was Ann Radcliffe.

The works of Mrs. Radcliffe have received considerable attention from the critics ever since their appearance. The general nature of her novels; her gloomy tyrants, Baron Malcolm, Marquis of Mazzini, Pierre La Motte, Montoni, Schedoni; her featureless heroines, Mary, Julia, Adeline, Emily, Ellena; her immaculate heroes, Alleyn, Hippolitus, Theodore, Valancourt, Vivaldi, have been discussed times out of number. Clara F. McIntyre in her *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time* (1920), has placed the claims of the authoress on a more solid foundation and has given fairly complete analyses of her plots. To go into details of individual works would, therefore, be mere repetition. In this survey, consequently, her novels will be dealt with only in so far as they are related to *The Castle of Otranto* in theory and fact, and the importance of the author will be adjudged in historical perspective.

There is no definite proof that Mrs. Radcliffe had read *The Castle of Otranto*. In face of this handicap we have to ascertain from the cumulative force of external and internal testimony whether Mrs. Radcliffe had a first-hand knowledge of Horace Walpole's story or not. Evidence is, on the whole, in favour of the supposition that *The Castle of Otranto* was not unknown to the author of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. A sister of Mrs. Radcliffe's mother had married Thomas Bentley, a "man of more general literature and of taste in

the arts," at whose house "the little niece" had the opportunity of meeting "several persons of distinction for literature."¹ In this cultured and intellectual atmosphere a well-known name like that of Walpole must have been mentioned, and *The Castle of Otranto*, with its immense popularity and fame, was not likely to be totally neglected. It may also be mentioned that Walpole's novel was reprinted at least five times during the decade 1786-96, including the well-known editions by Bodoni and Jeffrey. There is, moreover, a statement by one of Mrs. Radcliffe's biographers to the effect that the authoress "devoted much of her leisure time to the literature of the day, particularly poetry and novels."² Our hypothesis is further supported by the fact that Mrs. Radcliffe had certainly read Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother*, a play twice quoted in the chapter mottoes of *The Italian*.³

Starting with the assumption that Mrs. Radcliffe knew Horace Walpole's story, an examination of her novels brings to light some resemblances to *The Castle of Otranto*. These may be briefly summarized. It ought, however, to be remembered that more than twenty years had passed since Walpole wrote his story, and that many works on similar lines had intervened. There is the danger of crediting Walpole with what Mrs. Radcliffe may have taken from other sources. To avoid this pitfall some of the works which seem to have supplied the plots of her novels may be mentioned in passing. The parallelisms are suggested not to *establish* plagiarisms, but, first to estimate Mrs. Radcliffe's real debt, if any, to Walpole, and secondly, to trace, if possible, Mrs. Radcliffe's relationship to her predecessors.

The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne (1789) has for its hero a gifted peasant who later turns out to be a long lost heir of a noble family. Walpole, and even Miss Reeve, had made use of the same theme. But the real source of the plot seems to have been *Reginald Du Bray*. Family feuds; the noble youth disguised as a peasant; the heroine coveted by the

¹Clara F. McIntyre. *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time*, 1920, pp. 8-9, the quotations being from the *Annual Biography and Obituary* for 1824.

²Mrs. Elwood. *Memoirs of the Literary Ladies of England*, 1843, II, p. 168.

³*The Italian, or The Confessional of the Black Penitents*, 3 Vols., 1797, I, Chaps. i and ix

neighbouring baron—the similarity in these incidents is quite marked in the two novels. Even the name Matilda finds a place in *Reginald*. But there is one small incident in which a resemblance to *The Castle of Otranto* may be traced. Heroes and heroines had since the days of Walpole often been led through underground passages and dungeons, but scarcely any writer had so far taken them into aerial regions. Walpole imprisoned his Theodore in "the black tower" in Otranto castle; the prison of Osbert, Earl of Athlin, similarly, is in "a square room, which formed the summit of a tower built on the east side of the castle."¹

In her next novel, *The Sicilian Romance* (1790), Mrs. Radcliffe makes use of the manuscript device like Walpole, but again the subterfuge had become a common stock-in-trade by 1790. Moreover, the plot owes not a little to *St. Bernard's Priory* and possibly also to *The Recess* and *The Ring*. In *St. Bernard's Priory*, Lord Raby had confined his real wife and two daughters in the subterranean ruins near his castle; similarly, the Marquis of Mazzini in *The Sicilian Romance* has two daughters, and has secreted his real wife in an underground chamber in a deserted wing of the Castle, a portion which has the reputation of being haunted as in *The Old English Baron*. A son helps against his own father in both *The Sicilian Romance* and *St. Bernard's Priory*. So far we are not justified in tracing any particular part of the book to Walpole. But one small point may be mentioned. In *The Castle of Otranto* we have the convent and monastery of St. Nicholas; the convent bears the identical name in Mrs. Radcliffe's novel.

The Romance of the Forest (1791) affords a scene of more important resemblance. The hero in Walpole's as well as Mrs. Radcliffe's novel is called Theodore. In *The Castle of Otranto*, he is sentenced to death by the tyrant Manfred; and in one of the most dramatic scenes of the book the father of Theodore is made to suffer all the pangs of uncertainty regarding his child's fate. In *The Romance of the Forest*, similarly, Theodore is condemned to death by the Marquis de Montalt, and the point of highest tension is reached in

¹*The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, 2nd Ed., 1793, p. 35.

the paternal anguish of La Luc and in the final parting scene between father and son. In both instances, the catastrophe is averted in the nick of time.

After a lull of three years, Mrs. Radcliffe published *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), a novel which provides two more examples of parallels with *The Castle of Otranto*. Annette and Emily are talking of Signora Laurentini. . . . "‘As I was saying, she was very melancholy and unhappy, and all that, for a long time, and—Holy Virgin! what noise is that? did you not hear a sound, ma’amselle?’ ‘It was only the wind,’ said Emily, ‘but do come to the end of your story.’”¹ We may compare with this an incident in Walpole’s novel which has already been quoted.² The second resemblance is in a passage in which music is employed. We can find instances of this usage even in Mrs. Radcliffe’s former novels. Osbert in his tower hears soft sounds of music; Adeline was feeling depressed after her abduction by the Marquis de Montalt, but she “was at length drawn from her reverie by the notes of soft music, breathing such dulcet and entrancing sounds as suspended grief, and waked the soul to tenderness and pensive pleasure.”³ But a dramatic purpose is achieved for the first time in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Her use of music becomes similar to that in *The Castle of Otranto*, especially in the scene in which Emily and Dorothée are talking about the dead marchioness.

“‘Worse! Dorothée,’ said Emily, ‘can that be possible?’

‘I fear it was so, madam, there were strange appearances! But I will only tell what happened. My lord, the Marquis—’

‘Hush, Dorothée, what sounds were those?’ said Emily.

Dorothée changed countenance, and, while they both listened, they heard, on the stillness of the night, music of uncommon sweetness.”⁴

In *The Castle of Otranto* occurs the following passage in a conversation between Matilda and Bianca:

¹*The Mysteries of Udolpho, a Romance*, 4 Vols, 1794, II, pp 197–98.

²Vide Chapter I, p. 20.

³*The Romance of the Forest*, 1791, p. 68

⁴*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, IV, p. 37

"*Isabella* is of a chearful disposition, but her soul is pure as virtue itself. She knows your idle babling humour, and perhaps has now and then encouraged it, to divert melancholy, and enliven the solitude in which my father keeps us—Blessed *Mary*! said *Bianca* starting, there it is again!—dear Madam, Do you hear nothing?—this castle is certainly haunted!—peace! said *Matilda*, and listen! I did think I heard a voice—but it must be fancy; your terrors, I suppose, have infected me. . . . They listened attentively, and in few minutes thought they heard a person sing, but they could not distinguish the words."¹ Mrs. Radcliffe makes very dramatic use of music also in her next novel, *The Italian* (1797), but the work does not provide any episode which could be traced to *The Castle of Otranto*. On the other hand, its main inspiration seems to have come from a German story translated under the title *Herman of Unna* in 1794, and also from *The Monk*.

The similarities between the works of Mrs. Radcliffe and *The Castle of Otranto* pointed out above are undoubtedly confined to minor incidents, but the combination of these disconnected resemblances spread over different novels strengthens the assumption with which we started, the assumption that Mrs. Radcliffe was not unacquainted with Walpole's story. *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, *The Sicilian Romance*, and the others fall in the direct line of descent, and are a development out of the work of Mrs. Radcliffe's predecessors. *The Castle of Otranto* itself and the novels of "The School of Walpole," have been their foundations. We see thus that the influence of Horace Walpole on Mrs. Radcliffe is both a direct and an indirect influence—the force of tradition combined with the book itself. But while the debt to Walpole in actual facts is small, Mrs. Radcliffe certainly carries one phase of *The Castle of Otranto* to its highest point of evolution. This phase is the terror and the structural side of Walpole's tale.

Twenty years earlier, Miss Aikin had grasped the importance of the element of fear in *The Castle of Otranto*. That Walpole himself was conscious of the presence of this in-

¹*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., 1765, pp. 52-3.

gradient in his book becomes evident from his comment on *Sir Bertrand* (1773). "Miss Aikin flattered me," he said, "even by stooping to tread in my eccentric footsteps. Her *Fragment*, though but a specimen, showed her talent for imprinting terror."¹ The tacit union of his footsteps and terror is significant. This element which had been recognized by Mrs. Barbauld; which was also incidentally made use of in *The Ring*, *Melissa and Marcia*, *Rosa de Montmorien*, *Emmeline*; and which had a place even in the historical tales of the Walpolian School, is taken up by Mrs. Radcliffe as the underlying principle of her works. She might well have appropriated to herself the words from the introduction to the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, that terror was "the author's principal engine." Mrs. Barbauld's *Fragment* was premature; in the decade 1778-88 fear was subordinate to the medieval; it becomes the most important part in Mrs. Radcliffe. A study of her successive novels from this point of view shows an interesting development.

Mrs. Radcliffe's sphinx-like reticence has left us no direct statements on her work; but, indirectly, her novels are an extremely suggestive revelation of her mind. The very fact that she is not theorizing consciously gives her remarks in the stories a certain charm, and these afford the best evidence of her critical attitude. From scattered hints it is possible even to reconstruct the author's artistic theory. Three things stand out conspicuously—first, that Mrs. Radcliffe had a deeply psychological interest in terror; second, that in her classification fear was divided into glooms of "reason," "glooms of superstition," and "glooms of apprehension"; and last, that she recognized the effectiveness of suspense as a literary weapon. Her novels are best taken in their chronological order, and the relevant passages are quoted as they occur in the discussion.

In *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* we come across a significant sentence in the very beginning of the book. After he has seized Osbert, Earl of Athlin, Baron Malcolm starts racking his imagination for the invention of tortures equal to the force of his feelings of hate and revenge; "he at length

¹Letters, XI, 112-13, June 27, 1780.

discovered that the sufferings of suspense are superior to those of the most terrible evils, when once ascertained, of which the contemplation gradually affords to strong minds the means of endurance";¹ and he finally decides to keep the Earl in suspense regarding his fate. A similar phrase occurs when Malcom had decided to ask for Mary as ransom for Osbert; but, says Mrs. Radcliffe, he "concealed, for the present, his purpose, that the tortures of anxiety and despair might operate on the mind of the Countess, to grant him an easy consent to the exchange . . ." ² It is this knowledge of practical psychology which influenced Mrs. Radcliffe's technique and these sentences may well be taken as a statement of principles on which all her novels are constructed. She decides in her works to play Baron Malcolm towards the reader.

The next novel, *The Sicilian Romance*, contains no statement illustrative of the author's methods. Mrs. Radcliffe realizes that the creation of suspense is her *forte*, and there is more complexity of plot in this than in any of her later novels. Every possible means to heighten the tension of nerves is used. Moving lights, haunted wing; Ferdinand suspended on the broken staircase in the middle of the night; the frequent escapes and pursuits of Julia; confusion caused by wrong identity; robbers, murdered bodies, underground chambers; tyrants; broken sentences, secrets half-revealed; the force of elements; convents and monasteries—all these find a place in the book. The increase in properties as compared with the first novel is immense. *The Sicilian Romance* is an experiment in technique.

The plot becomes much more simple in *The Romance of the Forest*, and from the structural point of view, this is probably Mrs. Radcliffe's best novel. There is not the same profusion of hair-breadth escapes as in *The Sicilian Romance*, but there is greater unity and concentration. Just before the scene shifts to Paris, the tension is like that of the highest point in a tragedy. The climax is very dexterously contrived. Mrs. Radcliffe has found her vein by this time, and plots

¹*The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, a Highland Story*, 2nd Ed., 1793, p. 37.

²*Ibid.*, p. 41.

constructed on the basis of suspense continue also in her two later novels. But simultaneously, there is an increase of interest in pure terror—the dread of the dim unknown. A sentence indicative of Mrs. Radcliffe's attraction towards the psychology of fear may be quoted. La Motte sees a skeleton in the square stone room. "That thrilling curiosity," the author says, "which objects of terror often excite in the human mind, impelled him to take a second view of this dismal spectacle."¹

While in *The Sicilian Romance*, and *The Romance of the Forest*, Mrs. Radcliffe concentrated on plot as a whole, and terror was mostly the result of dramatic situation and suspense, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* the plot is looser and more rambling, though *individual* scenes of terror occupy greater attention. The disappearance of Ludovico from the chamber of the dead marchioness; the rising of the pall in the same room; the incident of the Black Veil—these stand out in the reader's mind. The feeling of fear in the above incidents is not so much the result of action, as of mystery and suggestion. Mrs. Radcliffe appeals more to the firmly ingrained superstitious instinct of man. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* we also come across a passage which shows that the author's attitude towards terror was becoming more serious and deeper in its analysis. Emily had heard of the picture with the Black Veil and also the stories connected with it. Curiosity prompted her to go and have a look at the picture. "As she passed through the chambers, that led to this, she found herself somewhat agitated; its connection with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation of Annette, together with the circumstances of the veil, throwing a mystery over the subject, that excited a faint degree of terror. But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object, from which we appear to shrink."²

Proceeding in the same ascending scale, Mrs. Radcliffe combines dramatic technique, suspense, and individual

¹*The Romance of the Forest*, 1791, p. 26

²*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, II, pp 229-30.

scenes of fearful awe in *The Italian*. The type of terror employed is more subtle and refined, with greater instinctive and psychological appeal. The mystery enveloping the deeds of the Inquisition provided the author with a weapon exactly suited to her genius. In this book we find another very suggestive statement. ". . . What ardent imagination ever was contented to trust to plain reasoning, or to the evidence of the senses? It may not willingly confine itself to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, soars after new wonders into a world of its own!"—this is Schedoni's reasoning, and he says he created the monk's mysterious warning incident in the ruins of Paluzzi because, seeing that Vivaldi had "a susceptibility which rendered [him] specially liable to superstition," he trusted to influencing him more by creating "the impression of awe."¹ The whole passage is an exposition, a commentary and a defence of the writer's own novels.

The view that the emphasis on terror increases in the successive works of Mrs. Radcliffe is supported by another significant change—the decreasing medieval in them. Her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), was written when the vogue of historical tales had started. The story is accordingly laid in days when Baron Malcolm was "still residing in all the pomp of feudal greatness." There is a mention of "clans," and trumpets are frequently sounded; Alleyn manages "the lance and the bow with exquisite dexterity"; an annual festival is held in which the common people participate, while from the ramparts of the castle the countess and her lovely daughter behold the feats performed. This is the only medieval colour in the book, but its presence clearly links the novel with "the Walpolian school." Of course we notice, too, the presence of elements for which Mrs. Radcliffe later became famous; she has grasped the importance of the principle of suspense; but the desire to be faithful to ages past is, in however slight a degree, also definitely present. In her subsequent stories not only is this pretence of historical colouring dropped, but

¹*The Italian*, III, pp 393-94

"feudal" times too are altogether discarded. The period of *The Sicilian Romance* is the close of the sixteenth century; *The Romance of the Forest* is supposed to have taken place about the year 1658; the date of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is nominally fixed at 1584; but *The Italian* brings us to the year 1764. Terror becomes the main concern of the author.

It may be mentioned that Gothic architecture still continues to occupy a place in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. In fact, it is raised to an unprecedented height of mystery and romance. Although monasteries, abbeys, castles, ruins, form an indispensable part of the author's works, they are introduced not to create a mediæval atmosphere, but entirely for their "terrific" possibilities. The castle of Udolpho, Chateau-Blanc, ruins of the fortress of Paluzzi, are still here, but they are themselves studies in terror. In the last decade, the historical element was the predominating part in the novels of "The Walpolian School," and terror was in minor association with the Gothic; the Gothic finds a place in Mrs. Radcliffe only in minor association with terror. In this sense, Mrs. Radcliffe's novels are again a landmark. They are the culminating point of the movement started by the writers of *The Ring*, *Melissa and Marcia*, *Emmeline* and *Rosa de Montmorien*, writers who had felt the appeal of the Gothic castle and taken it out of its mediæval setting. This chapter has been entitled "The Evolution of the Tale of Terror"; it may more graphically be called "The Parting of Ways." Terror and 'the mediæval' were both constituent parts of *The Castle of Otranto*; they were in combination in the historical tales of the "School of Walpole"; *The Castle of Otranto* is completely resolved into its factors by Mrs. Radcliffe.

Turning to the types of terror used by Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* gives us a clue to the author's own classification. We read in one place, "Daylight dispelled from Emily's mind the glooms of superstition, but not those of apprehension";¹ on another occasion we are told, "Emily was relieved by this conversation from some of the terrors of superstition, but those of reason increased . . ."² By "glooms

¹*The Mysteries of Udolpho, a Romance*, 4 Vols, 1794, II, p. 210.

²*Ibid.*, III, p. 187.

of apprehension" Mrs. Radcliffe means fears produced by objects of "natural" terror—for example, night, darkness, a murdered body or a rugged scene of nature; in "glooms of superstition" are included feelings of awe which result from anything supernatural, or even the suggestion of it; while by terrors of "reason" the author denotes the fear of the unknown in the known, the uncertainty between two likely contingencies. The last result is achieved, of course, through a dramatic method of construction, and the use of suspense. In this again Mrs. Radcliffe was only evolving to a higher stage what had been stressed by Horace Walpole in his novel. The flight of Isabella, Theodore on the point of execution, the accidental death of Matilda—these were the striking incidents in *The Castle of Otranto*. The terrors of "reason" in Mrs. Radcliffe are evoked by scenes constructed on exactly the same principle—as instances we may cite Alleyn's escape, or Osbert on the ramparts of Malcolm Castle, in the author's first story; the frequent chase of Julia in *The Sicilian Romance*; the final scenes in *The Romance of the Forest*; the flight of Emily from the castle of Udolpho; or Schedoni bending over Ellena in the house near the sea.

In the treatment of "the glooms of apprehension" and "the glooms of superstition," however, Mrs. Radcliffe differs from Walpole in one important point. While Walpole made unrestricted use of the supernatural, without any conflict in his mind about the propriety of its use, Mrs. Radcliffe is troubled by qualms of conscience. Her reason permits her to employ "the glooms of apprehension"; but when it comes to a question of using the other type of terror, there is a distinct feeling of hesitation. The most that the author does indulge in is Adeline's prophetic dreams in *The Romance of the Forest*. At the same time Mrs. Radcliffe fully realizes that the marvellous and the supernatural have an unfailing appeal for man and that they provide the most obvious means of exciting apprehension. It is only the teacher in her which puts an obstacle in the way; she would not be an agent in encouraging superstitious beliefs in youthful minds. A middle course is therefore followed. In the creation of "the glooms of apprehension," Mrs. Radcliffe does not

hesitate to make full and frequent use of "the glooms of superstition," provided she can in the end satisfy also the demands of reason and morality. All mysterious events in her novels, after the utmost amount of terror has been extracted from them, are finally resolved in a natural manner. These natural explanations—a device of which we have had previous instances in *Maria* and *The Castle of Mowbray*—are the inartistic compromise the author makes between her literary sense and her moral sense, between her imagination and "judgment," as the eighteenth century would have called it. In this, Mrs. Radcliffe's method was just the product of the age. She only caught, refined, and enlarged the current ideas. That it is so becomes evident from *Radzivul, a Romance*, supposed to be a translation "from the Russ of the celebrated M. Wocklow," published in 1790. The book appeared the same year as *The Sicilian Romance* and could not have been influenced by Mrs. Radcliffe, and yet it is written on lines exactly similar to hers. We find in it a gloomy count, scenes of mystery, terror and suspense, and what is more important, even the apparition which is accounted for reasonably.

The rationalizing tendency becomes evident even in minor details. Mrs. Radcliffe feels the propriety of making her abbeys and castles haunted; there are always delicate hints and dubious suggestions of the supernatural; but as a salve to her conscience she invariably puts in qualifying, precautionary sentences about what sensible people believe, or ought to believe. "Among the rest, it was said that strange appearances had been observed at the abbey, and uncommon noises heard," we read in *The Romance of the Forest*, "and though this report had been ridiculed by sensible persons as the idle superstition of ignorance, it had fastened so strongly upon the mind of the common people, that for the last seventeen years none of the peasantry had ventured to approach the spot."¹ This attitude gives a sort of contradictory air to Mrs. Radcliffe's works. By the aid of her suggestive imagination and her remarkably supple phraseology, the authoress manages to invest simple objects with

¹*The Romance of the Forest*, 1791, p. 17.

mysterious pregnancy. The heroines are in a perpetual shiver; even the reader is kept on the stretch of expectation; but nothing really happens. And it is this which made Anna Seward write, "One has heard of a labouring mountain bringing forth a mouse: In Mrs. Radcliffe's writings mice bring forth mountains."¹

Thus although Mrs. Radcliffe carried the principle of terror to its highest pitch, and although her work was a culmination of Walpole from one point of view, she was also one of the most important forces which postponed the imitation of *The Castle of Otranto* in the direction of the supernatural. Her distinction between the two "glooms"—those of "apprehension" and "superstition"—is analogous to Mrs. Barbauld's differentiation between "natural terror" and "artificial terror." Mrs. Radcliffe carries the former to perfection, but the latter is used by her only very half-heartedly. Of all the writers of "The Walpolian School," Miss Fuller was the only person who had employed the unexplained supernatural to any considerable degree. She was an exception. Otherwise, in the majority of novels the divine agency is exhausted by dreams and omens. By the end of the period 1789-94, in spite of Mrs. Radcliffe, we have instances also of the use of 'the marvellous' on the lines of Walpole, and, as we shall see, directly under the inspiration of *The Castle of Otranto*. The supernatural may have lagged behind, but the real point of importance is the development of works constructed mainly on the basis of fear.

To sum up, it ought to be stated that Mrs. Radcliffe met with immediate recognition and praise from the critics. Nathan Drake called her "The Shakespeare of Romance." If the comparison be stretched a little we can say broadly that Mrs. Radcliffe's novels stand in relation to *The Castle of Otranto*, and to *The Ring*, *Reginald Du Bray*, *St. Bernard's Priory* and others, as Shakespeare's plays stand in relation to the work of Kyd, Lyly, Lodge, Greene, and Marlowe. The attempts of her predecessors were full of latent but undeveloped possibilities; it was Mrs. Radcliffe who created

¹*Letters*, V, 244. To Rev T. S. Whalley, June 7, 1799.

something beautiful out of their efforts. A Gothic castle, the explained supernatural, and descriptions of nature had been before; Mrs. Radcliffe invested the Gothic castle with romance, the explained supernatural with mystery, and nature with charm. It is to her credit to have grasped fully the importance of suspense and to have shown how to construct a novel on the dramatic basis which Walpole initiated. Her greatest contribution is the tale of terror itself, the crowning evolution of one phase of *The Castle of Otranto*

The limits of the present chapter have been fixed at 1794, because by that time Mrs. Radcliffe reached the height of her fame, and definitely begun her career as a creative force in English literature. The causes of her popularity were many. While the element of terror and suspense was the chief part of her novels, a careful consideration of them also reveals other sides. Mrs. Radcliffe cast forth her ideals into her stories, and made conscious attempts to draw pictures of a happy life led "under the influence of those sweet affections, which are ever attendant on simplicity and nature." Her works united in themselves elements of diverse and even contradictory appeals. They satisfied the moralist; "Oh useful may it be to have shewn, that, though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune!"—so ends *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. They appealed to the sentimentalist; the delicate sensibilities of Emily and St. Aubert, and the frequent showers of tears which dim the pages of her novels would have gratified the most lachrymose connoisseur of fine sensations. And lastly, the romantic enthusiast, with his heart yearning for the mysterious and the unknown, for ruins, and Gothic, and nature, found in her books the best expression of these things in prose fiction which had appeared so far. Mrs. Radcliffe soon found imitators. It is time to consider some other productions of these years which claim a place in this chapter.

III

There seems little doubt that the popularity of Mrs. Radcliffe gave a sudden impetus to novels dealing with mysteries and terror, with heightened and colourful themes, with gloomy tyrants and dark crime. Even Walpole was held responsible for this tendency by some people. A remark from a review of Scott's *Antiquary* in *The Monthly* may be quoted on the subject, though the statement has only a vague historical importance. Talking of the stratagems employed to convince Lord Glenallan that the woman he wished to marry was his own illegitimate sister, the critic says, "We cannot express much admiration of this horrible and unnatural story; which is not unlike some of the catastrophes of Horace Walpole, the father among us of this species of invention."¹ Whatever suggestions *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysterious Mother* may have given, the fact remains that it is only after the publication of *The Sicilian Romance*, and *The Romance of the Forest*, that novels with any claim to the title "tales of terror," become a prominent feature of the production of the period. After the years 1791 or 1792, the stream of the movement broadens and assumes more definite shape. The works tend to be marked with the peculiarities of a type. One is reminded of Walpole's remark to Lady Craven: "Most books are like pedigrees; the founder of a family is generally a genius, the descendants serve to people the world." Some works to which the phrase is applicable may be mentioned.

To this class belongs *Vancenza, or the Dangers of Credulity*, by Mrs. Mary Robinson, published in 1792. The book is a mixture of Mrs. Radcliffe and a tale of the Walpolean school. Suggestions of the supernatural, flowery descriptions of nature, and a romantic castle in the manner of "the mighty magician" of Udolpho,² are combined with a tournament, the venerable man "clad in a pilgrim's weeds," and prophetic dreams. As for the style of the book, *The*

¹*The Monthly*, N S LXXXII, 47, January, 1817.

²T. J. Mathias: *The Pursuits of Literature, a Satirical Poem*, 5th Ed., 1798. Dialogue the First, pp. 20-1, note.

Critical commented on it, "if you intended the language to be prose, it is too poetical; if to be poetry, it is very faulty."¹ *The Castle of Otranto* does not seem to have had any definite connection with the story, unless we see a resemblance between Walpole's Vicenza and the Vancenza of Mrs. Robinson, and also in "the long picture gallery" which occurs in both works. It may be mentioned in passing that "the picture of the good Alfonso" in Walpole's novel has started a train which continues throughout the Gothic novel. The portrait is used in various ways, sometimes with much dramatic effect. It occurs in *The Recess*, *The Castle of Mowbray*, *The Duke of Clarence*, *Mysteries Elucidated*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and many others. Even a novel like John Moore's *Zeluco* employs the device in the incident where Carlostein puts his arm round the waist of Laura Seidlits.²

Definite traces of Mrs. Radcliffe's influence are also noticeable in the works of Mrs. Eliza Parsons, who wrote *Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793), and *The Mysterious Warning* (1796), two of the seven "horrid" novels made famous by a mention in *Northanger Abbey*. The haunted wing of the castle with moving lights in the first book, is obviously suggested by *The Sicilian Romance*: while the persecution of Matilda by the lustful passion of her own uncle Weimar is not unlike Adeline's in *The Romance of the Forest*. Furthermore, just as Adeline finds refuge in Savoy with the help of her faithful servant named Peter whose sister resides there, Matilda seeks safety with the trusty Albert's sister living in Lucerne. The supernatural is accounted for naturally, and the explanation given is a great tribute to the meek docility of the countess of Wolfenbach! In obedience to the orders of a tyrannical husband, Victoria goes to the gallery and rattles a chain and groans and personally makes "such kind of noises as may appal those who come" near the castle. A good instance of the gradually increasing tendency towards extravagance of description and luridity of detail is offered by the revenge which Wolfenbach wreaks on his wife's lover, Chevalier de Montreville. In 1794, Mrs. Parsons published another story entitled *Lucy, A Novel*. Like Wordsworth's

¹*The Critical*, 2nd S., IV, 268-69.

²*Zeluco*, 2 Vols., 1789, II, p. 297.

Lucy, the heroine is an illustration of the inherent goodness and essential purity of man brought up in contact with nature. Supernatural appearances and a ruined mansion are introduced as usual. And as evidence of a change of taste we may quote two remarks from the book. A character Lady Boyne exclaims, "An old Castle! O, there is something delightfully romantic in the name;"¹ on another occasion she says, "I doat on ruins; there is something sublime and awful in the sight of decayed grandeur, and large edifices tumbling to pieces."²

While Mrs. Radcliffe began gradually to dominate these years, and became the popular model, *The Castle of Otranto*, too, was not extinct as a creative force and still retained its votaries. In 1791, was published *Tancred, a Tale of Ancient Times*, by J. Fox, Jun. Unfortunately, no copy of the book is available; but on the evidence of *The Critical* we know that "the milder features of the Castle of Otranto are copied in this sketch, which is an humble imitation of the same story."³ The frequent reprints of Walpole's novel in these years have already been mentioned. The book continued to figure in the public's eye even in other ways. The dramatized version of the tale was acted at Drury Lane on March 8, 1787, and at Covent Garden on March 22, 1790. As a fact of some interest we may add that in 1794 Henry Siddons wrote an opera called *The Sicilian Romance: or, The Apparition on the Cliffs*. The title-page conveys the information that it was "performed with universal applause at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden." The work of Henry Siddons is really a burlesque of the terror novel. How closely the name of Walpole was associated with the type by 1794 becomes evident from the fact that the castle in the opera bears the name of Otranto.

The same year as *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, appeared *The Haunted Priory: or, The Fortunes of the House of Rayo, A Romance, Founded partly on Historical Facts*, by Stephen Cullen. The book reveals more marked traces of *The Castle of Otranto* than any work of this period discussed so far. The

¹ *Lucy, a Novel*, 3 Vols, 1794, I, p. 224.

² *The Critical*, N. Ar., II, 355.

³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 223.

novel may be considered at some length because it brings us to another landmark in the influence of Walpole. The element in which Mrs. Radcliffe was deficient is amply made use of by the author of *The Haunted Priory*.

Baron Rayo is suddenly deprived of all his estates on a fabricated charge of treason, and cast into a prison. His whole family is also implicated in the fall. After many years Baron Rayo has a dream which reveals that it is Don Isidor who will restore his children to him. At last Rayo arrives at the castle of Duero and is well received by Don Isidor. Here he is strongly attracted by the appearance of Isidor's son Alphonso, who bears a strong resemblance to his own child Gonsalvo. With divine aid Alphonso is enabled to find the solution of the whole mystery. It is revealed that Marquis de Punalada, the gloomy tyrant of the story who had fallen in love with Gonsalvo's wife, was the root cause of all the troubles. He is at last exposed and Rayo finds his daughter-in-law in the vaults of the castle of Vallesanto. It also turns out that Alphonso was really the grandson of Rayo, the nurse having exchanged him in his childhood with another baby. Everything ends happily through a marriage between Alphonso and one of Don Isidor's daughters.

It will be seen that there is scarcely any similarity between Stephen Cullen's plot and that of Walpole. But when we take minor incidents and details into consideration, the similarities become unmistakable. *The Castle of Otranto* has provided many striking incidents in the book. Let us for a moment keep the supernatural of Walpole in view—the enormous helmet which crushed Conrad to death and its waving plumes, the mighty sabre, the rattling of the giants' armour, and the name Alfonso itself. Turning to Baron Rayo's dream in which Don Isidor gives him his children, we read, "I thought you vanished, but soon returned, and advancing towards me smiling, presented me with a golden helmet in which was laid my child, my Alphonso: I suddenly grasped the helmet, and snatched the child to my bosom, when looking down, I perceived that the helmet falling had killed his father, who lay bleeding in agony on the ground."¹

¹*The Haunted Priory*, Dublin, 1794, pp. 52-3.

The event is too unusual and the comparison too obvious to leave any doubt as to its source of inspiration. Stephen Cullen is putting to a new use the impression made on him by the crashing helmet in *The Castle of Otranto*. Two more instances which complete the resemblance may be cited. When the clue to Gonsalvo's body is found in a vault, a further search is instituted there. "At length they came to a heap, as they thought, of earth; the Baron struck it with his foot, a helmet and coat of mail rolled about the floor—The Baron took up one part, Don Isidor another. It is the armour of a giant rather than a common man, said the Priest."¹ Even the sabre is not left out, and is dug up in the course of the search. Amongst various marvellous occurrences which fell to the lot of Alphonso in the ruined priory, "He heard the clashing of a sword against armour—his mind was wrought up to the madness of horrid expectation—and straight a figure . . . stood before him. It seemed far above the common size, but its aspect was rendered still more formidable by an enormous war-like plume that nodded on its helmet . . ."² Once the assumption that *The Castle of Otranto* was the source of Stephen Cullen is established, other resemblances also become noticeable. Dreams are an active motive force in both stories—Frederic was led to Isabella through the agency of a dream, Rayo is directed to Don Isidor by a similar revelation; Theodore was recognized by a strawberry mark, Alphonso is identified by the sign of some grapes on his back. And finally, in the Marquis of Punalada we have a character allied to Manfred; both are trying to avert a prophesied doom. Just as Matilda falls in love with the picture of the rightful owner of the principality of Otranto, the marquis's daughter is enamoured by a portrait of Alphonso and a fortune-teller predicts that whenever she saw "a man who resembled that picture, the house of Punalada would tumble to the ground."³ The prognostications come true in Walpole as well as in Stephen Cullen.

The Haunted Priory represents an interesting stage of development. Although its main source of inspiration is *The*

¹*The Haunted Priory*, Dublin, 1794, p. 165.

³*Ibid.*, p. 144.

²*Ibid.*, p. 130.

Castle of Otranto, the book was written at a time when Mrs. Radcliffe had made a name for herself with *The Sicilian Romance* and *The Romance of the Forest*. Her influence is paramount in the technique and the general atmosphere of Stephen Cullen's story. Deep forests, stupendous mountains full of an awful solemnity, cataracts and thundering waterfalls, sighs, groans, and figures that suddenly vanish, are all present here. The period of action is fixed in Spain in the days of Peter the Cruel, but the only medieval colour is the mention of armour and, on one occasion, the possibility of a single combat. The main concern of the author is the creation of terror and suspense, and not historical accuracy. In this again *The Haunted Priory* illustrates "The Parting of Ways," mentioned in the last section. Stephen Cullen's aim was to write a "Tale of Terror." The Middle Ages do not interest him beyond the fact that they provide beautifully gloomy castles, criminal monks, banditti and the Inquisition. What chiefly engrosses his attention is the desire to mystify and to terrify his readers; medievalism is merely a tool. From this point of view Stephen Cullen is carrying on the tradition of Mrs. Radcliffe. It is only on the supernatural side that he deviates from her methods, and here *The Castle of Otranto* is once more the inspiration and the model. That phase of Horace Walpole's tale which had been neglected by Mrs. Radcliffe is also brought to the forefront. The divine agency is rather moralized; it is more sanctimonious than superstitious, but as we pointed out in an earlier part of this essay, the supernatural was employed in the majority of Gothic novels in this century to fulfil "extraordinary providential purposes." As a contemporary summary of its functions we may quote from the "Prologomena" to *Tales of Terror! or, More Ghosts* (1802): "A Ghost is supposed to be the spirit of a person deceased, who is either commissioned to return for some especial errand, such as the discovery of a murder; to procure restitution of lands or money unjustly withheld from an orphan or widow; or having committed some injustice whilst living, cannot rest till that is redressed. Sometimes the occasion of spirits revisiting this world is, to inform their heir in what secret place or private drawer in an

old trunk they have hidden the title deeds of the estate; or where, in troublesome times they buried their money and plate. Some ghosts of murdered persons, whose bodies have been secretly buried, cannot be at ease till their bones have been taken up, and deposited in consecrated ground, with all the rites of Christian burial."

The Haunted Priory is thus one of the first novels of *terror* in which the supernatural on the lines of *The Castle of Otranto* is used. The influence of Walpole has reached another stage of development by 1794. It was perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the times, and with the logical course of evolution, that the medieval side of Walpole's story should have attracted attention first, "natural" terror next, and "artificial" terror last. The barriers of reason had to be broken step by step. Little is added to the terror novel after this date for which Walpole may claim much credit. The changes that take place in the type, however, take us into the next chapter.

It becomes evident from the foregoing pages that the mainspring of the new developments in the period 1789-94, has been the realization of fear as an artistic principle. We have estimated the contribution of *The Castle of Otranto* to this phase, and it is apparent that the book had a considerable direct as well as indirect influence. Turning to the reviews once more, we find that even contemporary critics were not unaware of the relationship between the new products and the Gothic story of Walpole. When *The Romance of the Forest* came out, *The Critical* traced its genealogy saying, "The greater part of the work resembles, in manner, the old English Baron, formed on the model of the Castle of Otranto."¹ Still more significant from our point of view is the fact that while in the decade 1778-88, reviewers had associated Walpole's novel with the heroic romance and the centre of attention was its medieval part, in the years 1789-94 there is a shifting of emphasis from its Gothic to its ghost element—to the element of terror. The factor which Mrs. Barbauld had theorized about in a precocious attempt in 1773, is recognized by even the conserva-

¹*The Critical*, N. Ar., IV, 458

tive "guardians of literature,"¹ as an important ingredient of *The Castle of Otranto*, and as a definite entity. We read in a review of *The Castle of Vallery* in 1792, "This story is an imitation of the Castle of Otranto, Sir Bertrand, the Old English Baron, and others, in which the chief passion intended to be excited is fear."² The critic heartily disapproves of "this resource of invention," but the important thing is the stress laid on fear as being "the chief passion intended to be excited" in Walpole's tale. We see thus that contemporary opinion supports the general deductions which have been made in this chapter—that the basis of innovations was the element of terror, and that this phase was only a development of one side of *The Castle of Otranto*.

If we may anticipate a little, a few instances from the reviews to illustrate not only the attraction of the critics towards terror, but also its establishment as a legitimate implement in fiction may be given. When *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was published, *The Critical* opened its review in a most appreciative manner, saying:

"Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy,
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

Such were the presents of the Muse to the infant Shakespeare, and though perhaps to no other mortal has she been so lavish of her gifts, the keys referring to the third line Mrs. Radcliffe must be allowed to be completely in possession of."³

The Monthly was not less enthusiastic and speaks of "the strange luxury of artificial terror."⁴

In a review of *The Sorcerer*, which shows that people had started to theorize about the instinct of fear, *The Critical* said in 1796, "Supernatural agency, when judiciously managed, and where philosophy and true religion have not wholly eradicated its terrors from the popular mind, is a fine machine in the hands of the poet and romance writer. The

¹So the reviewers were called by *The Monthly* in 1808; N.S., LVI, 463.

²*Ibid.*, N.S., IX, 337.

³*The Critical*, N. Ar. XI, 361.

⁴*The Monthly*, N.S., XV, 280

terrible and the sublime, perhaps, cannot be separated . . .” In the same notice the reviewer goes on, “The catastrophe of the present work harrows up the soul with emotions too shockingly vivid to be gratifying; they exceed in a great degree all the limits of pleasure which critics point out as the sources of the satisfaction we receive from the perusal of works of this nature.”¹ And by 1797, we find *The Monthly* classifying novels as belonging to “the *terrible* school.”²

The later manifestation of “the terrible school” and the relations of *The Castle of Otranto* with it will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹*The Critical*, 2nd S, XVII, 113

²*The Monthly*, N S, XXII, 93.

CHAPTER V

THE END OF WALPOLE'S CREATIVE INFLUENCE AND THE CAUSES OF ITS DECLINE: 1795-97

AVERAGE authors usually imitate only those writers who have either achieved some fame, or who satisfy some mental need of the time. When *The Castle of Otranto* first appeared, it was an exotic attempt: it found no immediate followers. In course of time, as the outlook changed and new intellectual fare was required, Walpole's story got its chance. Fresh models were needed in the outburst of activity during the eighties, and the notoriety of the book called the attention of the public towards it. Some have greatness thrust upon them. In spite of the potentialities of Walpole's novel, this truth was never better illustrated in literature than in the case of *The Castle of Otranto*. "The School of Walpole" came into being in the decade 1778-88. Terror, mystery, and suspense were the centres of attraction in the years that followed. And by 1794 we find that all the phases of Walpole's tale have evolved into separate recognizable, definite types. Hints vaguely thrown out, stray suggestions, properties—castles, pictures, vaults, galleries, underground passages, towers, monasteries, convents, statues, ruins, music, moon, and wind—everything has been made to yield maximum results. The suggestive powers of the book have been taxed to the utmost. The question now is, what place does *The Castle of Otranto* occupy after 1794 in the class of fiction which it did so much to create? Of the fifteen "terrific" and historical novels which have been consulted and which belong to the three years covered by the present chapter, only three show traces of Walpole's Gothic story. It may well be asked why there was this marked weakening in the direct connection between *The Castle of Otranto* and the fiction of the period. The

causes of the decline can be summarized in one phrase—the emergence of more popular models. On the one hand the possibilities of Walpole's book had been developed to their utmost, and its capacity as a source of inspiration in untried directions exhausted; on the other there arose a writer who, although only developing to a higher stage a suggestion of *The Castle of Otranto*, definitely eclipsed the master. Simultaneously with the rise of Mrs. Radcliffe, translations from German literature also began to appear on the market, and these two forces dominate the production of the period. If echoes of Walpole are still heard in one or two novels they are distant and indistinct. A brief review of the general tendencies and some of the works of these years will illustrate the point.

In the last chapter a few reasons to account for the popularity of Mrs. Radcliffe were given. A glance at the periodicals of the time reveals the extraordinary fame and vogue of the "fair Magician" of Udolpho.¹ As early as 1796, *The Critical* said in a review of *Austenburn Castle*, "Since Mrs. Radcliffe's justly admired and successful romances, the press has teemed with stories of haunted castles and visionary terrors; the incidents of which are so little diversified, that criticism is at a loss to vary its remarks."² We may quote another statement of *The Critical* from a review of *Valombrosa, or the Venetian Nun* in 1805: "Amongst the numerous, or, to speak with more propriety, innumerable, imitations of 'the Mysteries of Udolpho,' with which the press has groaned, we must rank the present production."³ To these we may further add the testimony of Sir Walter Scott. "Mrs. Radcliffe, as an author," he said, "has the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school."⁴ How dominating her influence had become, and how at one stroke after the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* a new fashion had been set on foot, becomes evident from the comment of *The Monthly* on *The*

¹*Azemia, a Novel*, by J. A. M. Jenks, 2 Vols., 2nd Ed., 1798, II, pp. 237-38.

²*The Critical*, 2nd S., XVI, 222.

³*Ibid.*, 3rd S., IV, 329.

⁴*Lives of the Novelists*, ed. Austin Dobson, 1906, p. 319.

Abbey of Saint Asaph as early as 1795, in which the reviewer talks of "the present rage for the terrible."¹

About the middle of the last decade of the century, Gothic castles, abbeys, vaults, and scenes of terror seem to have become an inseparable part of fiction. Even writers whose motives were anything but to frighten their readers resorted to "Gothic" machinery as a matter of course. In 1795, Ann Yearsley, the milk-woman poetess, who had read *The Castle of Otranto* eleven years earlier,² was tempted to try her skill as a novelist. What her real object in writing *The Royal Captives* was it is difficult to tell, unless it be an interest in the psychological reactions of a noble soul faced with misery and life-long imprisonment. The book is in the form of a diary kept by Henry, the son of an elder twin-brother of Louis XIV. Dungeons, caves, midnight flights through forests, Algerian corsairs, however, are indifferently used in the story. Still better evidence of a diffusion of this taste is afforded by *The Creole, or The Haunted Island* by S. J. Arnold, Junior, published in 1796. The title might lead one to expect a tale of bloody horrors, but the real object of the writer is to make "a metaphysical research in the strength of nature." Emperor Selim tries the experiment of bringing up his son, Narconah, in total seclusion, excepting the company of a tutor. A Gothic castle, with the usual vaults and tunnels and mysterious figures, is fixed on as the scene of the educational venture. But the interests of the author lie in directions entirely different, and in the end he saves himself the worry of giving an explanation of some marvellous incidents which he had cursorily introduced, by an easy device—the roll which contained the solution of the mystery is blown into the sea by a gust of wind, a divine indication that the past should be buried and forgotten!

That Mrs. Radcliffe had become a popular model is also evident from the number of novels in which the explained supernatural is used. In 1796, Mrs. Bonhote informs the reader in the introduction to her *Bungay Castle*, that "it is now the prevailing taste to read wonderful tales of wonderful

¹*The Monthly*, N S, XVIII, 229

²*The Letters of Horace Walpole*, XIII, pp 215-6. To Miss Hannah More, November 13, 1784

castles,"¹ and warns him not to expect anything uncommon from her book, for "as Solomon so many centuries ago declared, there was nothing *new* under the sun."² The author may, certainly, claim some originality. Supernatural effects are created by a squirrel jumping out of a pie, and people are advised to get up early in consideration of the cook. The strange noises and mysterious occurrences which frighten the characters of the story are finally accounted for as being effects produced by ventriloquism. *The Haunted Cavern*, which also appeared in 1796, was written by John Palmer, a schoolmaster of Bath. It is less mundane than *Bungay Castle*, but runs to the other extreme. The hero clasps "the fleshless bones" of his supposedly dead parent in an ecstasy of grief.³ The noises in the haunted cavern, which gives the title to the story, were caused by a band of robbers, who had made it their residence. In the same class we may group *Ranspach, or the Mysteries of the Castle* (1797). There is again a repetition of Radcliffian themes and technique. Mysterious occurrences are resolved in a natural manner also in *Manfredi, Baron St. Osmund*, *The Ruins of Avondale Priory*, and *Santa-Maria, or The Mysterious Pregnancy*. These novels will be discussed later in the chapter.

Turning to the other important new influence in these years, it will be recollected that, as early as 1787, *The Critical* expressed a feeling of "congenial warmth for everything of German origin."⁴ The success of *The Sorrows of Werther* has already been commented on; the book went through five editions in ten years. If any better evidence of its popularity were necessary, it can be found in the works written with the avowed intention of counteracting its influence. The moral age rushed to arms against the "pernicious poison" of the emotional abandonment of Goethe. *Eleonora, from the Sorrows of Werther* was published in 1785; and in 1786 appeared *The Letters of Charlotte, during her connexion with Werther*, the preface of which mentions an instance "well known in the metropolis, that a young and amiable lady who, 'rashly ventured on the unknown shore,' had

¹*Bungay Castle, a Novel*, 2 Vols, 1796, I, p. vii.

²*Ibid.*, I, p. xiv.

³*The Haunted Cavern, a Caledonian Tale*, 1796, p. 165.

⁴*Vide* Chapter III, p. 63.

the *Sorrows of Werther* under her pillow when she was found in the sleep of death."¹ There was something stirring in the heart of the age which pressed for freedom. Henry Mackenzie in 1788 eulogized *The Robbers* of Schiller, and this has been taken as the starting point of a serious interest in German literature. First translated in 1792, *The Robbers* was reprinted in 1795, 1799, 1800. Shelley, Coleridge, Scott fell under its sway. The popularity of the book is another manifestation of the attitude which enthusiastically welcomed Goethe's novel. There is a grandeur of conception in Schiller's play which is truly tragic. The language is coloured, bold, impassioned and pitched in a high key; and it is only the emotional intensity of the action which justifies it. But the transition from pathos to bathos can be incredibly swift, and in England, in the hands of the minor novelists, the results of this diction were truly ridiculous. The emotional frenzy of which we begin to see signs in the fiction of the period, owes not a little to the influence of *The Sorrows of Werther* and *The Robbers*.

In spite of an increased interest in German literature (in 1793, *The Critical* speaks of "the daily extension of the German language amongst us"),² it is significant of the trend of the times that the books which were first translated were works dealing with the supernatural and the terrible, works which catered to the demand for mystery and excitement. *The Monthly* said in a review of *Herman of Unna* in 1794, "The romance is not among the uncultivated fields of German literature; and, if we have hitherto been made acquainted only with the *Agathon* even of WIELAND, and have still to wish for the *Golden Mirror* and the *Peregrinus Proteus* of that fascinating writer; if we have only a feeble and defective translation of Goethe's *Werther*; if the *Ghost-Seer*, the *Wandering Jew*, and others, are not even commonly known by name among us;—yet several of their less distinguished novels have obtained a very extensive circulation in this country . . ."³ The fact is accounted for by the

¹*The Letters of Charlotte, during her connexion with Werther*, New York, 1797, p. viii.

²*The Critical*, 2nd S., VII, 506.

³*The Monthly*, N.S., XV, 21

decade's quest after terror. Both *The Necromancer* and *Herman of Unna* were translated even before *The Ghost-Seer* of Schiller. *The Monthly* laid its finger on the real reason of the popularity of these "less distinguished novels," when it said in a review of *The Necromancer*, that the author had revived the superstition of conjuring up spirits "to extract from it new sources of the terrible."¹ And in this connection it is interesting to note that Germany gave to England what *The Castle of Otranto* is said to have inspired also in that country.²

A few words may be said about the more important German translations; namely, *The Necromancer* and *Herman of Unna* (1794); *The Ghost-Seer*, *The Sorcerer*, and *The Victim of Magical Delusion* (1795), and *Horrid Mysteries* (1797). If we were to summarize the general characteristics of these novels, three things stand out prominently—their 'explained supernatural,' their mysterious tribunals, and their psychological interest. *The Necromancer*, by K. F. Kahlert, written under the pseudonym of Lawrence Flammenberg, is the story of Father Peter, alias Father Francis, alias Volkert, an English orphan, who was an adept in the art of juggling. He practises on the credulity of the people, becomes the head of some gangs of robbers, and the book thus is a jumble of bloodshed, conflagrations, incantations and sorcery, the latter finally explained away with the aid of "chymistry." *Herman of Unna*, by Professor Kramer, published in 1794, is probably the best of the whole group, excepting the novel of Schiller, as far as the creation of mystery is concerned. The meetings of the Secret Tribunal, "that machine, with the thousand eyes of which the SEERS, as they call themselves, obtain knowledge of everything that is done, and discover mysteries that seem impenetrable,"³ are really interesting, and hold the attention of the reader. The author manipulates his materials with some success. The same type of assemblies is exploited in *The Victim of Magical Delusion*, and *Horrid Mysteries*. The effects of these models are apparent in *The Italian* of Mrs. Radcliffe.

¹*The Monthly*, N.S., XVI, 465.

²cf. S. T. Coleridge *Biographia Literaria*, ed J. Shawcross, 1907, II, pp 183-84.

³*Herman of Unna*, 3 vols., by Professor Kramer, 1794, II, p 35

Themselves written under the inspiration of *The Ghost-Seer*, these works further strengthened the influence of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in the technique of the apparently marvellous. The psychological phase is typified by *The Sorcerer, A Tale, From The German of Veit Weber*. The book is marked by an imaginative glow, and an impetuous fervour; in some scenes there is the heated atmosphere of the amorous epicureanism of Gautier. Francesco loves Evermonde. He is guilty of some unscrupulous acts in the quest after wealth. When he finally solicits Evermonde for more than she as a betrothed was willing to give, he narrates all the crimes he had committed for her sake, to soften her heart. On hearing the recital of his deeds, she spurns him, and in the end he flings himself on the rocks on the seashore, where flies and wasps "inserted their suckers into his torn flesh, and sated themselves with his blood and juices."¹ As a general summing up we cannot do better than cite the picturesque though exaggerated opinion of *The Critical* from a review of *The Bravo of Venice* in 1805: "Novels have commonly been divided into the pathetic, the sentimental, and the humorous; but the writers of the German school have introduced a new class, which may be called the *electric*. Every chapter contains a shock; and the reader not only stares, but starts, at the close of every paragraph; so that we cannot think the wit of a brother-critic far-fetched, when he compared that shelf in his library, on which the Tales of Wonder, the Venetian Bravo, and other similar productions were piled, to a galvanic battery."² That the line pointed out by the Germans was immediately followed becomes evident from a novel like *The Abbey of Saint Asaph* (1795). Since no copy of the book is available, the evidence of *The Monthly* may be relied upon. "He [the author]," said the reviewer, "has thought it necessary, in compliance with the present rage for the terrible, to conduct the reader into a horrid cavern (where the father of the Heroine has been shut up for the unmerciful term of nineteen years), and there to terrify him with a fiery spectre emitting from its gaping jaws sulphurous flames, and sending forth horrid screams, and

¹*The Sorcerer*, 1795, p. 208.

²*The Critical*, 3rd S, V, 255.

with a moving and shrieking skeleton,—only that he may afterwards have the pleasure of finding that he had no occasion to be frightened, the spectre being *only* a man, its infernal flames nothing more than a preparation of phosphorous, and the inhabitant of the skeleton not a ghost, but a rat.”¹ The use of chemicals to produce supernatural effects is purely of German origin, and reminds one of *The Ghost-Seer*, *The Necromancer*, and *The Sorcerer*.

The best embodiment of the German influence and its fusion with the native tradition is, of course, *The Monk*, by Matthew Gregory Lewis. The book may also be taken as typical of the place occupied by *The Castle of Otranto* in the period. Writing to his mother in 1792 from Christ Church, Oxford, Lewis said that he hoped to earn some money for he was writing a tale “in the style of the ‘Castle of Otranto.’”² The date 1792 is significant. It was before Mrs. Radcliffe had reached the height of her fame, or German horror novels had become popular. The statement is also evidence of the inspiring force of Walpole’s story up to that point. But Lewis’s project never materialized, and the design seems to have ultimately taken the shape of *The Castle Spectre*, a play first acted with much success at Drury Lane on December 14, 1797. *The Monk* itself was published in 1795, and was written under the inspiration of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which Lewis termed, “one of the most interesting books that has ever been published.”³ The sources and the general characteristics of the book have received thorough attention from scholars.⁴ So much has been written on it already that to discuss the work in any detail would be futile. In this survey only a few general remarks will be made to illustrate its place in the history of literature, and also to see if *The Castle of Otranto* has left any definite marks on it.

Were it not for the fact that years previous to its publication Lewis was labouring on a story under the inspiration of Walpole, it would be scarcely possible to trace any resem-

¹*The Monthly*, N S., XVIII, 229.

²*Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis* (Anon.), 2 Vols., 1839, I, pp. 64-5.

³*Ibid.*, I, p. 122.

⁴*Vide* Eino Railo *The Haunted Castle*, 1927, p. 345, Notes, on the study of the sources of *The Monk*.

blances between *The Monk* and *The Castle of Otranto*. With that fore-knowledge, however, some similarities, here and there, become visible. One is first struck by the repetition of names: Matilda, Theodore, and Father Jerome seem to have lingered in the memory of Lewis. The prophecy which was a central part of Walpole's novel is also used in a minor incident in *The Monk*. A gipsy forecasts Antonia's doom in mysterious phraseology, and the oracle is fulfilled.¹ A more important resemblance is noticeable in the final scenes of *The Castle of Otranto*, and the vision of Lorenzo in the church of the Capuchins. In Walpole we read of "a clap of thunder," the shaking of the castle to its foundations, and of "the form of *Alfonso*, dilated to an immense magnitude." The passage further runs: "Behold in *Theodore* the true heir of *Alfonso*!" said the vision: And having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of St. *Nicholas* was seen, and receiving *Alfonso's* shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory."² With the necessary alterations, this seems to have been the nucleus of a scene in *The Monk*. "His form was gigantic, his complexion was swarthy, his eyes fierce and terrible; . . . Antonia shrieked . . . Lorenzo flew to her succour; but ere he had time to reach her a loud burst of thunder was heard. Instantly the cathedral seemed crumbling into pieces; . . . Animated by super-natural powers she disengaged herself from his embraces; but her white robe was left in his possession. Instantly a wing of brilliant splendour spread itself from either of Antonia's arms. She darted upwards, and, while ascending, cried to Lorenzo: 'Friend! we shall meet above!'"³ How the gigantic size of the apparition in Walpole had impressed itself on Lewis's mind is apparent also in another incident. Jacintha Zuniga, the "prosing old woman," tells Ambrosio of the ghost she has seen and describes him as "a great tall figure . . . whose head touched the ceiling!"⁴ And if one may add another

¹*The Monk*, ed. E. A. Baker, 1929, pp. 25-6.

²*The Castle of Otranto*, 2nd Ed., p. 195.

³*The Monk*, 1929, p. 18.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 259.

small point, just as the statue of Alfonso in the church of St. Nicholas plays an important part in *The Castle of Otranto*, a statue of St. Francis has a share also in the action of *The Monk*.

We see thus, that even the minor debts to Walpole mount up quite considerably. Side by side with these, the effects of Mrs. Radcliffe's influences are also perceptible in "the gothic obscurity of the church," and especially in the description of the castle of Lindenberg. "The night was calm and beautiful; the moonbeams fell upon the ancient towers of the castle, and shed upon their summits a silver light," says Don Raymond; "All was still around me; nothing was to be heard except the night-breeze sighing among the leaves, the distant barking of village dogs, or the owl who had established herself in a nook of the deserted eastern turret. . . . Suddenly I heard a faint chorus steal upon the silence of the night."¹ Even the explained supernatural is not left out, and Ambrosio is frightened by a movement of curtains, though the imaginary ghost finally turns out to be only the waiting-woman Flora.

But these are scarcely the elements which have made *The Monk* famous. The mild, delicate, suggestive terrors of Mrs. Radcliffe are not here; nor the medieval of *The Castle of Otranto*. The convents, churches, monks, the inquisition and the supernatural create the impression of a vague medieval background, but it is nothing more than an impression. What distinguishes Lewis's novel is its luridity, its extravagance and its crude sensationalism. Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe are left far behind. *The Monk* is not a novel of terror; it is a novel of horror. The author does not try to evoke a shiver of fear at the invisible, the mysterious and the unknown; he tries to hammer his effects by visible, concrete objects and gruesome details. The desire to heighten the tone also accounts for the voluptuousness of some of his descriptions, a factor which prompted the remark of Mathias on "the arts of lewd and systematic seduction."² Violence, rape, murder, incest, dabbling in the occult, Lucifer himself,

¹*The Monk*, 1929, pp. 120-21.

²*The Pursuits of Literature*, 5th Ed., 1798, p. 195. Fourth Dialogue.

devils, carcasses, reptiles, "skulls, bones, graves," "rotting, loathsome, corrupted bodies," "noisome suffocating smells"—these form that part of the picture which has contributed to the notoriety of *The Monk*. The conflict in Ambrosio's mind before his fall—a clumsy conflict and of very short duration—gives also a psychological interest to the book. Thunder, lightning, sulphurous fumes and miracles abound. Everything is on a gigantic scale. And in these things Lewis introduced into England the horror-romanticism of Germany. The notoriety itself of the book made it an attractive object for imitation. It is seen thus that Lewis also combined with Mrs. Radcliffe and the translations from the German novels to throw *The Castle of Otranto* into the background. If Walpole's story still lingers, its only contribution is in minor incidents in plot, or the supernatural. We may end this brief sketch of the tendencies and works of these years with a consideration of three more novels, which either show traces of *The Castle of Otranto*, or which indicate the causes of that important new note of the period, the note of dissatisfaction and revolt against the whole school of terror.

In 1796 was published *Manfredi, Baron St. Osmund, An old English Romance*, by Sarah Lansdell. The Bodleian copy of the book contains an autograph statement in which the author apologizes for the puerility of the work, pointing out that it was written "amidst the rude inhabitants of a country hamlet." Mrs. Radcliffe is mentioned in the introduction, and the novel really belongs to the old "Walpolian school" in spirit, modified by the influence of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Romance of the Forest*. *Macbeth* seems to have been the author's chief source for the characters. When Manfredi returns from the Holy Wars, he imagines that the wind "howled in half formed accents, the prophetic greeting of his wished for greatness;"¹ Lady Manfredi goads him on to the perpetration of crimes; she walks in her sleep. There is the sentimentality and common sense explanation of mysterious occurrences in the style of Mrs. Radcliffe; but, side by side, the supernatural also plays an important part.

¹*Manfredi, Baron St. Osmund*, 2 Vols., 1796, I, p. 4.

As soon as Manfredi arrived to take possession of the baronial castle after murdering the real owner, "the minstrels ranged, prepared their harps to welcome the Baron to his domain; but their hands seemed to refuse the office; the air was strange and irregular."¹ There are two incidents of which the inspiration seems to have come directly from Walpole. In *The Castle of Otranto*, Diego was frightened by the sight of a giant's foot and part of his leg; later Bianca sees "the same hand that he saw the foot to in the gallery-chamber." Catherine, in Sarah Lansdell's work, informs the heroine Elinor, "Why, my lady, they say, there is a suit of black armour hangs in it, that belonged to some great warrior; and that every night, at a stated time, it joins itself together, and walks all over the tower."² This joining together of the armour is an unusual idea. Another resemblance still more marked, and quite as uncommon gives further credence to the suggestion that Walpole's novel was the source. Catherine reports about a portrait on one occasion, "Dunstan says he was crossing the room, the day that we came here, and the baron stepped from his frame, and walked before him."³ *The Castle of Otranto* continues to be an inspiration and a model in the direction of the supernatural. The element which Mrs. Radcliffe had neglected, and which had been on the whole lagging behind also establishes itself as a mode.

In 1796 appeared *The Ruins of Avondale Priory* by Mrs. Isabella Kelly. The book excites a moderate degree of interest, though there is an overcrowding of marvellous and mysterious incidents. The heroine is frightened like Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in the Black Veil episode. "Quick as possible she hastened where the light appeared, and softly pushing open the door, beheld—Eternal Providence! what might have appalled the most undaunted spirit."⁴ This happens in the second volume. In the third, the author gives a most incongruous explanation; the fright was caused only by "two perfect models" of the heroine's parents. But

¹*Manfredi, Baron St. Osmund*, 2 Vols., 1796, I, pp. 63-4.

²*Ibid.*, I, pp. 75-6.

³*Ibid.*, I, p. 81.

⁴*The Ruins of Avondale Priory*, 3 Vols., 1796, II, p. 37.

though the novel is, on the whole, of the Radcliffian school, the influence of *The Monk* is also noticeable in the character of Lady St. Clair, and her Machiavellian associate Bothwell. Herein lies the interest of Mrs. Kelly's novel. After Lady St. Clair has forced Ethelinde to drink some poison, she is tortured with remorse. "Ethelinde murdered—murdered to no purpose but my soul's despair:—Her children, Athwold's children will inherit—Oh! my burning brain!—my heart!—What is remorse? What is this gnawing of my spirit? 'Twas never felt before!—No! . . ."¹ This violence of action and language is something new, and no comment on its quality is necessary.

To the same class belongs *Santa-Maria; or The Mysterious Pregnancy*, by J. Fox, published in 1797, a year which has been fixed as the limit for this chapter. The book may be taken as representative of the direction taken by the tale of horrors, for so it may more appropriately be called, in the last years of the century. It is known on the evidence of *The Critical* cited in a previous part of this study that J. Fox had written a story in direct imitation of *The Castle of Otranto*.² *Santa-Maria* also shows traces of Walpole's Gothic story. But its predominating characteristics are a Radcliffian technique and an impetuosity and violence which show the influence of Lewis, and the German school. As has already been pointed out, the high key in which *The Robbers* was pitched could only be sustained by extraordinary genius, or extraordinary dramatic situations. But the style on the face of it looks extremely simple and easy to imitate; and *Santa-Maria* shows all the pitfalls which awaited a writer treading in the footsteps of Lewis and Schiller. Effect, stunning effect, must be produced at any cost. The event must somehow be concealed. To achieve this end J. Fox violates all laws of nature and even the most distant probability. Mrs. Radcliffe had set the pace in the creation of mystery and terror by means of suspense. The principle was acted upon by the host of writers who followed her. But Mrs. Radcliffe, it cannot be denied, had a very suggestive imagination and

¹*The Ruins of Avondale Priory*, 3 vols., 1796, II, p. 168.

²*Ide* Chapter IV, p. 135

a delicate and subtle touch. She never overstepped the bounds of poetic probability. In her novels there is "a willing suspension of disbelief." Her imitators lacked all her gifts. The principle on which her novels are constructed they grasped, but failed hopelessly in its execution. J. Fox writes in his prefatory epistle: "I have no doubt, gentle reader, but you may have travelled often-times, in something of a similar road, into which I am about to lead you.—Still, I will venture, before you set out, to avouch, that there are many cross-ways on this same road, that you have never struck into before, and which will, I hope, afford such fresh prospects, as may command new pleasures. And this, we will most stoutly venture to add, that we shall so far preserve and excite your attention (to a literary traveller, the most agreeable of all sensations) that all your skill and cunning, shall not command the fore-sight of two stages together, during the whole course of your journey; and that also, when you have nearly reached the end of this same journey, you shall entertain your doubts, whether you are to be set down at the great inn of prosperity, or, at the mean hedge ale-house of adversity."¹ Within limits there is nothing in the statement which can be cavilled at. But when the novel as a whole ceases to have any interest for the author but that of a competition in which his skill to conceal is pitted against the reader's cunning to anticipate the progress of the story, it becomes a strange ideal. Combine with this a desire for "fresh prospects" and a mediocrity of talent and the downfall of the horror novel is in sight.

The plot of *Santa-Maria* is rather involved, but even a general sketch will give an idea of the improbability and extravagance of the book. The story opens more or less in the same way as in *The Castle of Otranto*. Walpole's novel begins with the death of Conrad on the day of his marriage with Isabella. Fox's tale commences with the report of the death of Santa-Maria on the morning fixed for her nuptials with the young Prince Rinaldo. Count Rudolph bears a strong resemblance to Manfred. He is gloomy and ambitious and goes about with folded arms and knitted brows. The

¹*Santa-Maria, or the Mysterious Pregnancy, a Romance*, 3 Vols., 1797, I, pp viii-x.

names of Conrad and Bianca occur in both stories; a character called Manfredi has also a symphonic similarity with Walpole's Manfred. May not another resemblance be traced between the crashing helmet in *The Castle of Otranto* which forced a way through the courtyard to the vaults below, and the great bell in *Santa-Maria* which "had fallen from the dome, and occasioned the hideous crash and such also was the weight with which it fell, as to force apart some of the monuments nearest the centre of this gloomy and awful charnel-house?"¹ *Santa-Maria*, it turns out, was not really dead, but it is discovered, much to her parents' consternation, that she was pregnant. She, however, swears by all the saints that she is innocent, and the rest of the story is devoted to her adventures, the villainy of Count Rudolph, his final death, and the inevitable marriage of the heroine with the hero. In the book we also find a hermit, some pictures, minstrels, sighs, groans, a trip to the Holy Land, and tapers which light of themselves. The mystery of *Santa-Maria*'s pregnancy is finally solved in a manner which reveals the influence of Lewis. Contarini, an avowed enemy of the family, had adopted this method of wreaking vengeance, and had effected his purpose with the aid of a sleeping potion administered by a Carthusian monk. All through the novel one feels the tiresome repetition of stock properties, with the difference that the author exaggerates and magnifies everything. There have been instances before of half-revealed secrets and broken sentences, but J. Fox undeniably carries the palm. Two illustrations of the author's pantomimical efforts to arouse mystery may be given:

"This same castle was secure—impregnable—was . . . But more of that hereafter . . . Manfredi, in short, wished him to be safe there—and there alone. . . ;"² or "Contarini's name and character have been but slightly touched upon, in this humble page.—Surmise may spread her broad expanded wings—may soar—may flutter—and then may—droop—may—aye, may, at last, fall feebly as the air-blown gossamer. . . . Somewhat of this *hereafter*—things MAY come

¹*Santa-Maria, or The Mysterious Pregnancy, a Romance*, 3 Vols, 1797, III, p 135-

²*Ibid*, I, pp 30-1

out, *perhaps* to chill—to make the sensitive soul thrill with horror—to make the very hair stand perched on its native habitual roost, where so long it had laid recumbent. . . .”¹

Santa-Maria is perhaps an exaggerated instance, but it illustrates the direction which the novel of terror was taking in the last years of the century. Can it be wondered that a reaction against the type set in? Each step taken by the writers prompted by a desire to create “fresh prospects” from old properties, took them further and further from probability, and even imaginative possibility. Contemporary opinion is again of inestimable value for us. As early as 1795, *The Critical* said in a review of *The Castle of Ollada*, “Another haunted castle! Surely the misses themselves must be tired of so many ghosts, and murders.”² The same year a review of *The Haunted Cavern* runs, “In truth, we are almost weary of Gothic castles, mouldering turrets, and ‘cloud enveloped battlements’—The tale of shrieking spectres, and bloody murders, has been repeated till it palls upon the sense.”³ The year 1797 has been fixed as the terminating point for this chapter because by that time not only do the signs of discontent definitely crystallize, but satire against the whole school also comes into existence. T. J. Mathias wrote in 1797,

“Shall nought but ghosts and trinkets be displayed,
Since Walpole ply’d the virtuoso’s trade,
Bade sober truth revers’d for fiction pass,
And mus’d o’er Gothic toys through Gothic glass.”⁴

The Critical said in a notice of *The Count of Santerre* in 1797: “We cannot expect that novel-writers will have any pity for reviewers: but, for their own sakes, we could wish that they would cease to build castles in the air, and return to *terra firma*, to common life, and common sense.”⁵ And the critic started with the comment, “The usual furniture of modern romances,—old castles,—long galleries,—deep vaults,—sullen echoes,—flitting lights,—murders and revivals, are

¹*Santa-Maria, or The Mysterious Pregnancy, a Romance*, 3 Vols., 1797, I, pp. 26-7

²*The Critical*, 2nd S., XIV, 352.

³*Ibid.*, 2nd S., XV, 480.

⁴*The Pursuits of Literature*, 5th Ed., 1798. Fourth Dialogue, pp. 342-3.

⁵*The Critical*, 2nd S., XXI, 354.

jumbled here in a confusion which forms a greater mystery than any the authoress pretends to unravel."¹ In 1797, too, appeared a letter in *The Monthly Magazine*, signed "A Jacobin Novelist," which traces the origin of terror to Robespierre and which also gives a recipe for writing terror novels. It is particularly recommended that "a heroine with all the weakness of body and mind that appertains to her sex, but endowed with all the curiosity of a spy, and all the courage of a troop of horse," be chosen.² Another recipe was published about the same time in *The Spirit of the Public Journals* for 1797. "Take," said the writer,

"An old castle, half of it ruinous.
A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.
As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
An old woman hanging by the neck, with her throat cut.
Assassins and desperadoes, *quant. suff.*
Noises, whispers, and groans, threescore at least."

Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering-places before going to bed."³ Instances from the reviews can be multiplied considerably, but enough have already been given to illustrate the signs of satiety with "the terrible school" by 1797.⁴ The reaction was not confined to periodicals, but even novels of a satirical nature came to be written about this time. A few words may be said about these.

When in the eighties the "romantic revival" in fiction started, haunted castles acquired some popularity. In the middle of the last decade of the century the height of their vogue was reached. But the fashion was short-lived. The anti-romantic attitude had really never died out. As early as 1789, when the type was still growing, appeared *The Solitary Castle, A Romance of the Eighteenth Century*. In the character of the hero the author tries to give a picture of superstition. Disgusted with the world, Mr. Gunthorpe retires to the

¹*The Critical*, 2nd S, XXI, 354

²*The Monthly Magazine*, IV, 104.

³*The Spirit of the Public Journals* for 1797, 3rd Ed., 1802, I, 229

⁴More instances can be found in *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, May, 1799 (III, 40), and August, 1799 (III, 421), and in *Lady's Monthly Museum* for February, 1799 (II 129-33)

North of England to reside in an old castle. He had been a captain in the navy; he believed in the existence of enchanted islands; and according to the author, he walks about in the evening with a night-glass in his hand in order to keep "a good lookout for mermaids." *The Solitary Castle* is really a story of unexpected meetings, attempted seduction, and happiness to all in the end, but the desire to ridicule the supernatural and the Gothic is also present. Although there is no definite satire in them, the works of Prudentia Home-spun, Mrs. Jane West, may be mentioned in this connection. She wrote *The Advantages of Education, or the History of Maria Williams, A Tale for Misses and their Mammies*, in 1793; and her intention is to convince young ladies that "it is but seldom that they will be called forth to perform high acts of heroic excellence."¹ The author wrote another novel entitled *A Gossip's Story, and a Legendary Tale* on the same lines in 1797.

The first open and direct satire in an English novel² is probably in William Beckford's *Modern Novel Writing, or the Elegant Enthusiast*, published in 1796. The sentimental loves of Arabella Bloomville and Henry Lambent are nominally the theme, though in the course of the story, all the paraphernalia of contemporary fiction is exquisitely ridiculed. The terror novel does not fail to get its share in a chapter called "A scene of Horror, a Ghost and a Supper." It is a chapter only twelve pages in length, and describes the adventures of Henry Lambent on his midnight journey. In this short space, however, the hero encounters all the wonders of a four-volume novel of terror. Immense forests, strange murmurs and groans, female lamentation, "stupendous rocks that seemed to prop the skies," the howling wolf, a bloody spectre, and a mouldering abbey are all here. In this abbey after passing through still stranger wonders and meeting with an appearance "so exquisitely horrible" that all resolution failed him, the hero finally discovers that the

¹*The Advantages of Education*, etc., 2 Vols., 1793, I, p. 1.

²*The Wonderful Travels of Prince Fan-Feredin in the Country of Arcadia*. Translated from the French, appeared in 1794. No copy of the book is available. But *The Critical* says that the book arouses "a pleasant and harmless laugh" at the expense of old romances (*The Critical*, 2nd S., XI, 356.)

whole scene was a joke at his expense by some of his friends. It is significant that *The Castle of Otranto* is particularly mentioned in the book in a passage of subtle juxtaposition and incongruous contrast. Beckford probably had too much consideration for Walpole to say anything directly, but he has achieved his object by means of bathos. The dignity of chivalry and romance, the elevation and sublimity of a heroic tale suffer mighty loss when brought in association with vegetable wagons and the scullery. Immediately after a most rapturous scene in which "lucid drops" quiver on Lucinda's eyelids, the reader wakes up when told that "The maid servant who had been up stairs for the Castle of Otranto, met Matthew the butler on the landing place, and . . . asked him, rather petulantly, whether Jim the groom had sent the parson the potatoes."¹

William Beckford published another satirical work on the same lines a year later. It was *Azemia, a Novel: containing imitations of the manner, Both in prose and verse, of many of the authors of the present day*, written under the assumed name of Jacquetta Agneta Mariana Jenks. Walpole is not among the writers mentioned, but the terror school is again satirized in the explanatory footnotes and in occasional passages of exquisite mimicry. As a good illustration may be mentioned the adventure of Azemia in the lumber room, the heroine having never heard of a ghost before, because "in Turkey they are but little in use."²

To summarize briefly, it is seen that a reaction against "the terrible school" had definitely started by 1797. Walpole's direct influence reached its high-water mark on the terror side in the years 1789-94. With the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* the movement suddenly flared up, but brought with it the elements that were finally to consume it. The limited range of properties soon resulted in monotony; the type began to pall by repetition. Terror itself is an emotion which is pleasant only in small doses; nowhere is the palate deadened more quickly than here. A familiar ghost ceases to be a ghost. Furthermore, the writers who

¹*Modern Novel Writing, or the Elegant Enthusiast*, 2 Vols, 1796, I, p. 27.

²*Azemia, a Novel*, etc., 2nd Ed., 2 Vols, 1798, I, pp. 50-4.

followed Mrs. Radcliffe tried to achieve their horror effects through quantity rather than quality; gross improbability was the consequence. The inartistic supernatural also detracted considerably from the interest and credibility of the tales. To be frightened at objects which were finally to be resolved in some natural manner was an insult to one's intelligence. The very fore-knowledge of an explanation to come completely destroyed the effect, and only made the technique look ridiculous. All these factors soon resulted in satiety. The influence of *The Castle of Otranto* in the real sense of the word—as a creative, inspiring, moulding force—had been on the decline ever since Mrs. Radcliffe appeared as a popular model. Translations from German literature and *The Monk* also contributed not a little to the relegation of Walpole's novel to the background. But by 1797, even if the word "influence" were to be extended to include the type itself with which Walpole's name was allied, it is seen that the fashion was passing away.

Adherents of the school of terror continue well into the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as is evident from the works of Francis Lathom, Mrs. Meeke, Sarah Wilkinson, T. J. Horsley-Curties, W. C. Green, and others. But they are the belated advocates of a type that was steadily declining in popularity. New production sought other fields of activity. The preface to Godwin's *St. Leon* speaks for itself. "The hearts and the curiosity of readers," the author said, "have been assailed in so many ways, that we writers who bring up the rear of our illustrious predecessors, must be contented to arrive at novelty in whatever mode we are able. The foundation of the following tale is such as, it is not to be supposed, ever existed. But, if I have mixed human feelings and passions with incredible situations, and thus rendered them impressive and interesting, I shall entertain some hope to be pardoned the boldness and irregularity of my design."¹ A quest after the new has started once more; the pendulum of taste moves on in its eternal swing. Human feelings and passions again attract the attention of the writers, and even in the tale of terror, an increase in psycho-

¹*St. Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, 1799, I, pp. vii-viii.

logical stress is noticeable. These later manifestations owe nothing to Horace Walpole. Charles Robert Maturin, the best exponent of the terror novel, was to practise the art of harrowing the soul of his readers in the next quarter of a century. But his writings are more in the nature of a *revival*, than embodiments of a rage of the time. His inspiration came from Mrs. Radcliffe and especially *The Monk*, which he called "the most extraordinary production of this period," and which he characterized with the epithets of "powerful and wicked."¹ Maturin had a high opinion of the literary merits of the work of Lewis. "The license of imagination," he said, "is indeed often wildly and wantonly abused in this bad book, but it is sometimes nobly and awfully displayed; and few scenes of supernatural agency have more power than that in which the apostate spirit appears in all the beauty and despair of a fallen angel to Ambrosio in the vault."² With Maturin one is far away from *The Castle of Otranto*. It is significant that in his opinion Walpole had no influence on the English novel. "Walpole's castle of Otranto, though dramatized by Jephson," he wrote in *The British Review* in 1818, "had few imitators."³ The knowledge of literary history shown by Maturin in the whole article is extremely vague, but the statement reveals that Walpole as a creative force must have been dead for some time. His own words also support the fact that terror had ceased to be a fashion: "The host of imitators that followed [referring to the followers of Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis], . . . soon brought this style of writing into a contempt which it would not but for them have merited: . . . they forgot that it is only 'the eye of childhood that fears a painted devil,' and the public, when they had recovered from their fright in sober indignation tore off the mask from their ill-dressed phantom, and laughed at the imposture. Authors can harden themselves against any species of hostility but ridicule: the magic book has been shut for ever, and the hand that presumes to open its pages now must have more than mortal nerve."⁴ Maturin's was the presumptuous hand.

¹*The British Review*, XI, 49.

²*Ibid.*, XI, 47.

³*Ibid.*, XI, 49.

⁴*Ibid.*, XI, 49-50.

It will be beyond the scope of the present essay to carry an examination of the terror novel any further. Creatively, the influence of *The Castle of Otranto* on the English novel came to an end about 1794. That the book had a large share in moulding the fiction of the period is evident from the foregoing pages and the fact was not lost sight of by even the contemporaries. When Horace Walpole died, *The Monthly Magazine* wrote in 1797, "*The Castle of Otranto*, a romance, by this author, as an unique of the kind, was favourably received by the public, and produced an agreeable exercise of the severer passions; it has been, however, the prolific parent of a number of strange compositions, which daily load the press . . ." ¹ The same year *The Gentleman's Magazine* more or less repeated the above comment on Walpole's novel, but added, "as the archetype of all that miserable trash which now deluges the press, and is calculated to excite apprehension and surprize, without throwing one new light upon life or nature, it may be regretted that the author ever presented it to the world." ² Even T. J. Mathias wrote of Horace Walpole in 1797, "The spirit of enquiry he introduced was rather frivolous, though pleasing, and Otranto Ghosts have propagated their species with unequalled fecundity. The spawn is in every novel shop." ³ It will be noticed that in all these statements, the name of Horace Walpole is associated with the terror novel and particularly with the supernatural in it. A decade earlier Walpole had been allied with the historical tales, and critics talked of "the Walpolian school." This double-sided recognition of Walpole is added testimony in favour of the dual influence and the double nature of Walpole's story. It also illustrates the disintegration of *The Castle of Otranto*, "the Parting of Ways" between its terror and its historical elements, which was mentioned in the last chapter. How definitely the emphasis shifts from the medieval to the preternatural may be deduced from an article in the *Lady's Monthly Museum*, entitled "The Complaint of a Ghost, Written by Himself, Herself, or Itself," published in 1800:

¹*The Monthly Magazine*, III, 238

²*The Gentleman's Magazine*, LXVII, i, 259, March, 1797.

³*The Pursuits of Literature*, 5th Ed., 1798, p. 343, Notes, Fourth Dialogue.

"Torn by the irresistible incantations of a literary coxcomb," the ghost said, "from my peaceful abode at the bottom of the Red Sea, where I enjoyed the calm sweets of oblivious repose, I have for several years been doomed to the most odious and abject slavery, in a land characterized as the favourite residence of the fair Goddess of Freedom."¹ An explanatory note on the word "coxcomb" informs the reader that "This title has been aptly conferred, by an impartial Critic, on the late Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to whose 'Castle of Otranto' we owe the introduction of the fantastic herd of Ghosts, Goblins, etc., into novels and romances."² By 1797, Horace Walpole has become the father of a type; his name a convenient tag. To repeat the words of the interpretation put on the word "influence" in the beginning of this study, all the phases of Walpole have evolved to "the stage of common conscious literary property." Later his Gothic story was probably a source of inspiration to Sir Walter Scott. A few words will be said about it in the next chapter.

A detailed estimate of the contribution of *The Castle of Otranto* to the English novel would be a mere recapitulation of what has already been said at various stages of this survey. It is to the credit of Walpole that his story contained the potentialities which made it a vital source of suggestion for at least thirty years. To have brought the age of reason back to romance was no minor achievement. If one may quote the words of Lockhart, "Nothing that is a part, a real essential part, of human nature, ever can be exhausted—and the region of fear and terror never will be so. Human flesh will creep to the end of time at the witches of Macbeth, exactly because to the end of time it will creep in a midnight charnel-vault:—

'So was it when the world began,
So ever will it be.'³

The Castle of Otranto, though not the first English novel to use this element, was undeniably the book that popularized

¹*Lady's Monthly Museum*, IV, 365

²*Ibid*, IV, 365.

³*Lockhart's Literary Criticism*, ed Clive Hildyard, 1931, pp 106-7. From *Blackwood*, July, 1824

it and set the ball rolling. That legacy has become a permanent part of English literature. Some people have traced back to Horace Walpole the sensationalism of Dickens, Reade, and Collins,¹ and even some of the fiction of to-day. And what is not usually recognized, the historical novel owes a real debt to Walpole's goblin story.

¹cf, W. C. Phillips *Dickens, Reade and Collins*, New York, 1919.

CHAPTER VI

THE REPUTATION OF "THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO," 1797-1820

WHEN Walpole wrote to Hannah More in 1784, that his novel "was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written,"¹ his conscious modesty led him to make a truer remark than he really believed. At the same time, present-day depreciation of *The Castle of Otranto* must not lose sight of the contemporary popularity of the book, or its importance. Even when the seed sown by Walpole had flowered, borne fruit, and run to seed again, his novel continued to tower as an object of interest and admiration. It was reprinted at least eight times during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century. Editions appeared in 1800, 1801, 1804, 1808, 1810, twice in 1811, and in 1817. Walpole's story ceased to be a creative force, but it certainly became an object of scholarly interest. It will be a fit ending to a study of its influence to estimate the position of *The Castle of Otranto* in the years in which "the terrible school" was on the decline. Praise and blame may both be mentioned and weighed in opposite scales.

On March 31, 1797, Sylvester Douglas, Lord Glenbervie, made the note in his *Diary*: "Mr. Williams called on Lady Katherine yesterday. He fell into conversation concerning his old friend Lord Orford. . . . He says (though very fond of many of Lord Orford's writings) he never could get through the *Castle of Otranto* . . ." ² Was it not the same Gilly Williams who wrote to Selwyn on March 19, 1765, and said of Walpole's book that it was "a novel that no boarding-school miss of thirteen could get through without yawning. . . . He says it was a dream, and I fancy one when he had some feverish disposition in him." ³

Another instance of the same kind occurs in the *Diary* of

¹*Letters*, XIII, 215-16

²*The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas*, etc., ed. Francis Bickley, 2 Vols., 1928, I, p. 134.

³Quoted from Austin Dobson's *Horace Walpole, A Memoir*, 1890, pp. 205-6

Thomas Green. "Read the Castle of Otranto," he noted on February 1, 1797; "which grievously disappointed my expectations. The tale is, in itself, insipid; and Mrs. Radcliffe, out of possible contingencies, evokes scenes of far more thrilling horror, than are attained by the supernatural and extravagant machinery, which, after all, alone imparts an interest to this Romance."¹

Turning to criticism of a more literary nature, Isaac Disraeli wrote in his *Calamities and Quarrels of Authors* in 1812, "In his [Walpole's] works of imagination, he felt he could not trust to himself—the natural pathetic was utterly denied him. But he had fancy and ingenuity; he had recourse to the *marvellous* in imagination on the principle he had adopted the *paradoxical* in history. Thus 'The Castle of Otranto,' and 'The Mysterious Mother,' are the productions of ingenuity rather than genius; and display the miracles of art, rather than the spontaneous creations of nature."² Later the remarks of Disraeli seem to have suggested the brilliant and carping essay of Macaulay on Horace Walpole.

To this may be added the opinion of Hazlitt published in *The English Comic Writers* in 1819, an opinion which is extraordinarily clear, compact and advanced in its artistic concept. Speaking of the terror school he said, "The 'Castle of Otranto' (which is supposed to have led the way to this style of writing) is, to my notion, dry, meagre, and without effect. It is done upon false principles of taste. The great hand and arm, which are thrust into the courtyard, and remain there all day long, are the pasteboard machinery of a pantomime; they shock the senses and have no purchase upon the imagination. They are a matter-of-fact impossibility: a fixture, and no longer a phantom."³ The point of view of Hazlitt, however, was by no means the average attitude. It was an exception, and far in advance of its time, as will become evident from the other side of the picture.

If Gilly Williams could never get through *The Castle of*

¹*Extracts from the diary of a Lover of Literature*, 1810, p. 23

²*The Calamities and Quarrels of Authors*, 1812, I, pp. 108-10.

³*Lectures on the English Poets and the English Comic Writers*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, 1912, pp. 171-72

Otranto, there were others who expressed an appreciation of it in unbounded terms. Mrs. Elizabeth Carter thought it "a great pity that Horace Walpole ever wrote anything but *Castles of Otranto*."¹ As soon as Disraeli published his smart and subtle denunciation of Lord Orford, a person signing himself "H.R." took up the cudgels on Walpole's behalf, and wrote in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1812, saying, "I do not think so ill of Horace Walpole as Mr. D'Israeli, in the character inserted in *The Calamities of Authors*. He has unfortunately drawn him only in his worst aspects; which are touched indeed with some acuteness, and made sufficiently displeasing. It is a strange sort of niggardliness which denies the praise of genius to *The Castle of Otranto*. It exhibits picturesque fancy, invention, and, I contend, even pathos. . . ."²

George Hardinge saw beauties of another type in Walpole's novel. Writing to John Nichols on June 22, 1813, he said, "*The Castle of Otranto* is a model of its kind; and there is a wonderful grace in the language, which is neither too familiar nor too elevated. It seems inseparable from the characters, the scenery, and the incidents."³

The widespread fame of the book also becomes evident from the remarks of H. W. Williams describing a visit to Otranto, published in his *Travels in Italy, Greece and The Ioman Islands* (1820). The castle, he said, was "an imposing object of considerable size. It owes all its reputation in England to the interesting romance of that name."⁴ Williams also made "drawings of the castle from every point of view, not omitting the courtyard, where the gigantic helmet appeared;" and he continues, "The gateway is particularly splendid, and has a dignified and chivalric air, as indeed the whole building. Some palm trees, which are opposed to the aged and crumbling walls, had a fine effect, and heightened the sentiment inspired by the romance and the building itself."⁵

¹Cf. Oliver Elton: *A Survey of English Literature*, 1730-1780, 2 Vols., 1928, I, p. 75

²*The Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXXII, II, 206

³John Nichols: *Literary Anecdotes*, 1814, VIII, p. 526.

⁴*Travels*, etc., 2 Vols., Edin., 1820, II, p. 145

⁵*Ibid* II, pp. 145-6.,

Thus, even in the first quarter of the nineteenth century when imagination had definitely burst the bonds of "The Age of Reason," Walpole's Gothic story continued to be something more than a mere name and a literary curiosity. It had a deeper appeal. It brought in its train, not laughter, but romantic associations. In a short introduction to Walpole's edition in her *British Novelists* series, Mrs. Barbauld asserted in 1810, "Since this author's time, from the perusal of Mrs. Radcliffe's productions and some of the German tales, we may be said to have 'supped full of horrors,' but none of these compositions have a livelier play of fancy than *The Castle of Otranto*. It is the sportive effusion of a man of genius, who throws the reins loose upon the neck of his imagination. The large limbs of the gigantic figure which inhabits the castle, and which are visible at intervals: the plumes of the helmet, which rise and wave with ominous meaning; and the various enchantments of the place, are imagined with the richness and wildness of poetic fancy."

And here a poet's opinion will also bear repetition. Byron emphatically stated in his preface to *Marino Faliero* in 1820, "It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but, to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the *Castle of Otranto*, he is the 'Ultimus Romanorum,' the author of the *Mysterious Mother*, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be it who he may."

We may complete this bouquet of eulogies with the indulgent and significant appreciation of *The Castle of Otranto* by Sir Walter Scott, in his introduction to John Ballantyne's edition of the novel in 1811. No better evidence of Walpole's creative influence on him is required. The views were expressed before *The Waverley* series was begun, a point which gives them their importance. They are the embodiment of the reactions of an artistic mind to a stimulating source. The praise is given not so much to what Walpole actually did, but to what, in Scott's opinion, Walpole really "aimed at," to

his "object" rather than to his achievement. The critique is a revelation of how the problems of a historical novel were suggested to Scott by *The Castle of Otranto*. The "goblin tale" proved the nucleus round which he evolved his theories and his technique. Some selections from the introduction will illustrate the point, and with them this survey may be ended.

"*The Castle of Otranto* is remarkable not only for the wild interest of the story, but as the first modern attempt to found a tale of amusing fiction upon the basis of the ancient romances of chivalry. . . . As in his model of a Gothic modern mansion our author had studiously endeavoured to fit to the purposes of modern convenience or luxury the rich, varied, and complicated tracery and carving of the ancient cathedral, so in *The Castle of Otranto* it was his object to unite the marvellous turn of incident and imposing tone of chivalry, exhibited in the ancient romance, with that accurate display of human character and contrast of feelings and passions which is, or ought to be, delineated in the modern novel. . . .

"It is doing injustice to Mr. Walpole's memory to allege, that all which he aimed at in *The Castle of Otranto* was 'the art of exciting surprise and horror'. . . . Were this all which he attempted, the means by which he sought to attain his purpose might with justice be termed both clumsy and puerile. But Mr. Walpole's purpose was both more difficult of attainment and more important when attained. It was his object to draw such a picture of domestic life and manners during the feudal times as might actually have existed, and to paint it chequered and agitated by the action of supernatural machinery, such as the superstition of the period received as matter of devout credulity. . . . Indeed, to produce in a well-cultivated mind any portion of that surprise, and fear which are founded on supernatural events, the frame and tenor of the whole story must be adjusted in perfect harmony with this mainspring of the interest. . . . It seems to have been Walpole's object to attain, by the minute accuracy of a fable, sketched with singular attention to the costume of the period in which the scene was laid, that same association which might prepare his reader's mind for the reception of prodigies congenial to the creed and feelings of the actors. . . . This was a task which required no little learning, no ordinary degree of fancy, no common portion of genius to execute.

It cannot, however, be denied that the character of the supernatural machinery of *The Castle of Otranto* is liable to objections. Its action and interference is rather too frequent, and presses too hard and

constantly upon the same feelings in the reader's mind, to the hazard of diminishing the elasticity of the spring upon which it should operate. . . . It is for the dialogue that Walpole reserves his strength; and it is remarkable how, while conducting his mortal agents with all the art of a modern dramatist, he adheres to the sustained tone of chivalry which marks the period of the action. This is not attained by patching his narrative or dialogue with glossorial terms, or antique phraseology, but by taking care to exclude all that can awaken modern associations.

"We have only to add, in conclusion . . . that if Horace Walpole, who led the way in this new species of literary composition, has been surpassed by some of his followers in diffuse brilliancy of description, and perhaps in the art of detaining the mind of the reader in a state of feverish and anxious suspense, through a protracted and complicated narrative, more will yet remain with him than the single merit of originality and invention. The applause due to chastity and precision of style—to a happy combination of supernatural agency with human interest—to a tone of feudal manners and language, sustained by characters strongly drawn and well discriminated—and to unity of action, producing scenes alternately of interest and grandeur;—the applause, in fine, which cannot be denied to him who can excite the passions of fear and of pity, must be awarded to the author of *The Castle of Otranto*."¹

¹This introduction was included in the *Lives of the Novelists* in a slightly enlarged form.

APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE EDITIONS OF *THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO* FROM 1764 TO 1820

- 1765 *The Castle of Otranto*, a story, translated by William Marshal, Gent. From the original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, etc. London, 1765.
- 1765 Second Edition [By H.W.]. London, 1765.
- 1766 Third Edition [By H.W.]. London, 1766.
- 1782 Fourth Edition. London, 1782.
- 1786 Fifth Edition. London, 1786.
- 1791 Sixth Edition. London, 1791.
- 1791 Another Edition. Bodoni: Parma, 1791.
- 1793 A new Edition. London, 1793.
- 1796 Jeffrey's edition of *The Castle of Otranto*. . . . New Edition. On vellum. London, 1796.
- 1801 New Edition. London, 1801.
- 1804 Another Edition. London, 1804.
- 1808 *The Old English Baron*; a Gothic story . . . And *The Castle of Otranto*; with a biographical preface. London, 1808.
- 1810 *The Castle of Otranto*, Vol. 22 of Mrs. Barbauld's "British Novelists." London, 1810.
- 1811 *The Castle of Otranto*; a Gothic story, with a Critical Introduction [Scott's]. Edinburgh, 1811.
- 1811 *The Old English Baron*; a Gothic Story . . . And *The Castle of Otranto*; with a biographical Preface. London, 1811.
- 1817 *The Castle of Otranto*. London, 1817.

APPENDIX B

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF "ROMANTIC" NOVELS PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1762 AND 1797

NOTE.—There is not a single list, as far as I am aware, of such novels as show the revival of romanticism in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Many lists and catalogues of fiction have been published, such as,

- A Descriptive List of Romantic Novels* (1890) and
- A Descriptive List of British Novels* (1891) by W. M. Griswold;
- Comprehensive Subject Index to Universal Prose Fiction*, by Zella Allen Dixon (1897);
- Guide to the Best Historical Novels and Tales*, by Jonathan Nield (1904);
- A Descriptive Catalogue of Historical Novels and Tales*, by Courthope Bowen (1905);
- The English Catalogue of Books between 1700 and 1786*, published by W. Bent in 1786 and a supplement in 1811;

but all these, in one way or another, fall far short of the needs of a research student. The word "Romantic," however, is vague and needs to have its boundaries defined, and it may be said that the following list was primarily compiled with a view to trace and illustrate the subject of this study, and has, therefore, its accompanying limitations. But within its limits, an attempt has been made to make the list as complete as possible, and also to assign the date and the name of the author to each work.

The main sources have been *The Monthly* and *The Critical* Reviews, while Watt's *Bibliotheca Britannica* and the catalogues of the British Museum Library have also proved helpful. The object of its compilation explains the inclusion of the translations of some German novels, and of the satires

on romantic fiction. The works of Fanny Burney have been included for historical perspective.

When a book is neither in the British Museum Library nor the Bodleian, evidence for its existence is cited. *C.R.* and *M.R.* stand for *The Critical* and *The Monthly* Reviews respectively. To avoid repetition in the bibliography, the catalogue numbers of texts consulted have been set in bold type; and, unless otherwise indicated, the place of publication is London.

1. *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury; an historical romance*. [By John Leland?] 2 vols. 1762.
2. *The Castle of Otranto*. A Story. Translated by William Marshal, Gent [By Horace Walpole.] 1765.
3. *Constantia and her Daughter Julia, an Italian History; with a discourse on Romances*. 2 Pamphlets. 1769. (*M.R.*, xl, 344.)
4. *The Hermit*. [By Lady ———Atkyns.] 2 vols. 1769.
5. *The Prince of Salerno*. 1770. (*C.R.*, xxix, 148.)
6. *The Hermitage; A British Story*. [By William Hutchinson.] York. 1772.
7. *Sir Bertrand, A Fragment*. From "Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose," by J. and A. L. Aikin. (Mrs. Barbauld.) 1773.
8. *The Champion of Virtue*. [By Clara Reeve.] Colchester. 1777.
9. *The Old English Baron*. By Clara Reeve. (*The Champion of Virtue* with a new title.) 1778.
10. *Evelina*. [By Fanny Burney.] 3 vols. 1778.
11. *Prince Arthur; an Allegorical Romance; the Story from Spenser*. [By Alexander Bicknell.] 2 vols. 1779.
12. *Modern Anecdote of the Ancient Family of the Kinkervankotsdarsprakengotchderns*. [By Elizabeth Berkeley, Margravine of Anspach.] [1779].
13. *The Sorrows of Werther*. A German Story. [By J. W. von Goethe.] 2 vols. 1779.
14. *Reginald Du Bray: An Historick Tale*. By A Late Lord, Greatly admired in the Literary World. Dublin. 1779.

- ¹15. *The Siege of Aubigny*. An Historic Tale. [Translated from the French of M. D'Uffieux, by Thomas Manti.] 1781. (*M.R.*, lxxvi, 310.)
16. *Cecilia*. [By Fanny Burney.] 5 vols. 1782.
17. *The Recess*. By Sophia Lee. Vol. 1. 1783.
18. *The Ring; A Novel: In a Series of Letters*. By a Young Lady. 3 vols. 1784.
- ²19. *An Arabian Tale*. [i.e. Vathek. Henley's translation from the French of William Beckford.] 1786.
20. *St. Ruthin's Abbey*. A Novel. 3 vols. 1786. (*C.R.*, lvii, 236.)
21. *Maria, or the Generous Rustic*. [By George Monck Berkeley.] 1784. (*M.R.*, lxxi, 387.)
22. *Imogen, A Pastoral Romance from the Ancient British*. 2 vols. 1785. (*M.R.*, lxxii, 233.)
23. *The Recess*. Vols. II and III. By Sophia Lee. 1785.
24. *Eleanora: From the Sorrows of Werther*. A Tale. 2 vols. 1785.
25. *The Adventures of the Six Princesses of Babylon*. [By Lucy Peacock.] 1785.
26. *Maria*. A Novel. [By Elizabeth Blower.] 2 vols. 1785.
27. *Constance*. A Novel. The first literary attempt of a young lady. 4 vols. 1785.
28. *Love in a Cottage*. A Novel. By B. Walwyn. 2 vols. 1785. (*C.R.*, lx, 395.)
29. *Edwin and Anna, A Northumbrian Tale*. 3 vols. 1786. (*C.R.*, lxi, 235.)
30. *The Letters of Charlotte, during her connexion with Werter*. [By W. James.] 2 vols. 1786.
31. *Juhana*. A Novel. 3 vols. 1786.
- ³32. *The Cacique of Ontario*. An Indian Tale. 1786.
33. *The Rambles of Fancy; or Moral and Interesting Tales*. [By Lucy Peacock.] 2 vols. 1786.
34. *St. Bernard's Priory*. An old English Tale. Being the first literary production of a Young Lady. 1786.

¹The novel is ascribed to Major Manto in the list of books published by Hookham and Carpenter appended to *The Minstrel*, 1793.

²The Dictionary of National Biography gives 1784 as the date of publication

³According to *M.R.* (lxxv, 474), this tale was written by Mr. Richardson, Professor of Humanity at Glasgow, and appeared in the third edition of a volume of his poems, 1776.

35. *Lord Winworth; or the Memoirs of an Heir.* A Novel. 3 vols. 1787. (M.R., lxxvi, 266.)
36. *William of Normandy.* An Historical Novel. 2 vols. 1787. (M.R., lxxvi, 531.)
37. *Henrietta of Gerstenfield, A German Story.* 2 vols. 1788. (M.R., lxxvii, 79.)
38. *Louisa, or The Cottage on the Moor.* [By Elizabeth Helme.] 2 vols. 1787.
39. *Alan Fitz-Osborne.* An Historical Tale. By Miss [Anne] Fuller. 2 vols. Dublin. 1787.
40. *The History of Henrietta Mortimer; or The Force of Filial Enthusiasm.* 2 vols. 1787. (C.R., lxiii, 308.)
41. *Rosa de Montmorien.* A Novel. By Miss Ann Hilditch. 2 vols. 1787.
42. *The Niece; or The History of Miss Sukey Thornby.* By Mrs. P. Gibbes. 3 vols. 1788.
43. *Catherine; or The Wood of Llewellyn; a Descriptive Tale.* 2 vols. 1788. (C.R., lxv, 75.)
44. *Emmeline; the Orphan of the Castle.* By Charlotte Smith. 4 vols. 1788.
45. *Phoebe; or Distressed Innocence.* 2 vols. 1788. (M.R., lxxx, 169.)
46. *The Apparition; A Tale.* By a Lady. 2 vols. 1788. (M.R., lxxix, 466.)
47. *Heloise; or The Siege of Rhodes.* A Legendary Tale. [By George Monck Berkeley.] 2 vols. 1788.
48. *The New Sylph; or The Guardian Angel; A Story.* 1788. (C.R., lxv, 486.)
49. *Melissa and Marcia; or The Sisters.* 2 vols. 1788.
50. *Mary.* A Fiction. [By Mary Wollstonecraft.] 1788.
51. *St. Julian's Abbey.* A Novel, 2 vols. 1788. (C.R., lxvi, 255.)
52. *The Castle of Mowbray, An English Romance.* By the Author of St. Bernard's Priory. 1788.
53. *Alfred and Cassandra.* A Romantic Tale. 2 vols. 1788. (C.R., lxvi, 577.)
54. *The Inquisitor; or Invisible Rambler.* By Mrs. Rowson. 3 vols. 1788. (M.R., lxxix, 171.)

55. *Seymour Castle; or The History of Julia and Cecilia.* 2 vols. 1789.
56. *Powis Castle; or Anecdotes of an Ancient Family.* 2 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxv, 484.)
57. *Illusions of Sentiment.* A Descriptive and Historic Novel. 1789. (C.R., lxxv, 568.)
58. *The Solitary Castle, A Romance of the Eighteenth Century.* By the Author of the Village of Martindale. 2 vols. 1789.
59. *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne.* [By Mrs. Ann Radcliffe.] 1789.
60. *Agnes de Courci; a Domestic Tale.* By Mrs. Bennet. 4 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxvii, 474.)
61. *The Duke of Exeter.* An Historical Romance. 3 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxvii, 476.)
62. *Zeluco.* Various views of human nature, taken from life and manners. [By Dr. John Moore.] 2 vols. 1789.
63. *The Son of Ethelwolf.* An Historical Novel. By Miss Fuller. 2 vols. 1789. (M.R., lxxxix, 239.)
64. *The Spectre.* 2 vols. 1789.
65. *The Hermit of Snowden; or Memoirs of Albert and Lavinia.* [By Elizabeth Ryves.] 1789. (C.R., lxxviii, 163.)
66. *Louis and Nina; or An Excursion to Yverden.* 2 vols. 1789. (M.R.N.S., i, 109.)
67. *Lord Walford.* A Novel. By L. L., Esq. 2 vols. 1789.
68. *Rosenberg.* A Legendary Tale. By a Lady. 2 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxviii, 408.)
69. *The Countess of Hennebon.* An Historical Novel. By the author of the Priory of St. Bernard. 3 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxviii, 408.)
70. *William and Charles; or The Bold Adventurers.* A Novel. By the author of Lord Winworth. 2 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxviii, 494.)
71. *Albertina.* A Novel. 2 vols. 1789. (C.R., lxxviii, 494.)
72. *Earl Strongbow; or The History of Richard de Clare and The Beautiful Griselda.* [By James White.] 2 vols. 1789.

73. *Ethelinde, or The Recluse of the Lake*. By Mrs. Charlotte Smith. 5 vols. 1789.
74. *A Sicilian Romance*. [By Mrs. Ann Radcliffe.] 2 vols. 1790.
75. *Radziwil, A Romance, Translated from the Russ of the celebrated M. Wocklow*. 3 vols. 1790.
76. *Historic Tales*. A Novel. 1790. (*M.R.N.S.*, ii, 464.)
77. *The Statue Room; An Historical Tale*. By Miss [Rossetta] Ballin. 2 vols. 1790.
78. *The Maid of Kent*. 3 vols. 1790.
79. *Adeline; or The Orphan*. A Novel. 3 vols. 1790.
80. *Arnold Zulg*. A Swiss Story. By the author of *Constance*. 1790. (*M.R.N.S.*, ii, 353.)
81. *The Adventures of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster*. By James White, Esq. 3 vols. 1790. (*M.R.N.S.*, ii, 416.)
82. *Charles Henley; or The Fugitive Restored*. 2 vols. 1790. (*C.R.*, lxx, 219.)
83. *Gabrielle De Vergy*. An Historical Tale. 2 vols. 1790.
84. *Eloisa de Clairville*. An Historical Novel. 2 vols. 1790. (*C.R.*, lxx, 454.)
85. *Edmund; or The Child of the Castle*. A Novel. 2 vols. 1790. (*C.R.*, lxx, 454.)
86. *The Romance of the Forest*. [By Mrs. Ann Radcliffe.] 3 vols. 1791.
87. *A Simple Story*. By Mrs. Inchbald. 4 vols. 1791.
88. *The Orphan Marion; or The Parent Rewarded*. 2 vols. 1791. (*M.R.N.S.*, iv, 228.)
89. *The Adventures of King Richard, Coeur-De-Lion*. By J. White, Esq. 3 vols. 1791.
90. *Lidora*. An Ancient Chronicle. By M. de Gorgy. 2 vols. 1791.
91. *Tancred, A Tale of Ancient Times*. By J. Fox. 2 vols. 1791. (*C.R.N.Ar.*, ii, 355.)
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XX, 120-1.

1770; XXIX, 358.

1773; XXXVI, 235 and 443-4.

1777; XLIII, 473.

XLIV, 154.

1778; XLV, 316.

1779; XLVII, 477.

1781; LII, 456.

1783; LV, 233.

1785; LX, 233-4.

1786; LXI, 214.

LXII, 37-8; 393-4 and 469.

1787; LXIII, 76; 225; 307; 308 and

389-90.

LXIV, 480 and 481.

1788; LXV, 157; 485 and 486.

LXVI, 577.

2nd S., 1791; II, 355.

1792; IV, 268-69 and 458.

1793; VII, 506.

1794; XI, 361.

1795; XIV, 352.

XV, 480.

1796; XVI, 222.

XVII, 113.

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LXXVII, 190.

1788; LXXIX, 466.

N.S. 1792; IX, 337.

1794; XV, 21 and 280.

1795; XVI, 465.

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1797; XXII, 93.

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INDEX

A

- Abbey of St Asaph, The*, 144, 148
 Addison, Joseph, 7
Advantages of Education, The, 159
Adventurer, The, 32
Adventures of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, 112
Adventures of King Richard, Cœur-de-Lion, 112
Adventures of Peregrine Pickle, 3
Adventures of the Six Princesses of Babylon, The, 74
Ædes Walpoleanæ, 8
Agathon, 146
 Aikin, Anna Laetitia (Mrs Barbauld), 43, 44 note, 47, 50, 53, 84, 88, 123, 124, 131, 139, 169
 Akenside, Mark, 5
Alan Fitz-Osborne, An Historical Tale, 87, 94-96, 100, 101
Almorán and Hamet, 28
Amelia, 3, 26
Anne of Geierstein, 98, 116
Antiquary, The, 133
Apparition, The, 98, 99
Arabian Nights, The, 46, 74
Arcadia, 3, 15, 16
Argenis, 47
 Arnold, S. J. (junior), 144
Arville Castle, An Historical Romance, 106, 107
Astraea, 3, 8
Austenburn Castle, 107, 143
Azemá, A Novel, 160

B

- Ballin, Miss Rossetta, 105
 Barbauld, Mrs., See Aikin, A. L.
 Beattie, James, 34
 Beckford, William, 159, 160
 Behn, Mrs Aphra, 1
 Berkeley, George Monck, 97
 Bicknell, Alexander, 85
Biographia Literaria, 147 note
 Birch, 23
 Blower, Miss Elizabeth, 66, 70, 71, 78, 83
 Bonhote, Mrs., 118 note, 144
Bravo of Venice, The, 148
Bride of Lammermoor, The, 98
Bungay Castle, 118 note, 144, 145

O

- Burke, Edmund, 4 note
 Burney, Frances (Madame D'Arbly), 58, 63, 71 and note, 75, 83
 Byron's *Marino Faliero*, 169

C

- Calamities and Quarrels of Authors*, 167, 168
 Carter, Mrs Elizabeth, 168
Cassandra, 3, 4
Castle of Morvray, An English Romance, The, 97-98, 100, 101, 130, 134
Castle of Ollada, 157
Castle of Otranto, The its plot, 11-14; relation to Strawberry Hill, 17-18; its sources, 11, 15, 16; critical analysis, 11, 18-21; publication in a serial form, 23; contemporary criticism of it, 23-25, reasons of its delayed imitation, 29-31, 35-37, revival of interest in it, 55-56, its contribution to the popular realistic fiction, 82-84, the supernatural element, 95-96, its relation with the historical novel, 98-102, 113, 116-118; the height of its influence, 102; its disintegration, 128; its relation with the Tale of Terror, 123, 128, 138-140; satire on it, 64-66, 68, 160; contemporary recognition of its influence, 163-164; other references, 38, 45, 48, 53, 56, 68, 110, 135, 139, 140, 149, 162, *et passim*
Castle of Vallery, 140
Castle of Wolfenbach, 134
Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, 120, 123, 124, 127
Castle Spectre, The, 149
Cecilia, 58, 71 note, 112
Celema, or The History of Hyempsal, King of Numidia, 3 note
Champion of Virtue, The, 22, 35, 47-54, 96
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 59, 112
Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea, 28
Clarissa, 7
 Clark, Hugh, 34
Clelia, 3, 4, 6
Cleopatra, 3, 4, 7
 Cole, William, 7, 9, 16, 23

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 27, 146, 147
 note
 Collins, Wilkie, 165
 Colman, George, 2
Concise History of Knighthood, A, 34
 Congreve, William, 21 note
 Corneille's *Medea*, 95
Count of Narbonne, The, 29 note, 56
Count of Santerre, The, 157
Creole, or the Haunted Island, The, 119,

144
 Croxall, Samuel, 11
 Cullen, Stephen, 135
Cypriot, The, 114

D

Dante, 5
 D'Arblay, Madame, See Burney,
 Frances
 Defoe, Daniel, 1
 De Maar, H. G., *History of Modern
 English Romanticism*, 74 note
*Description of the Villa of Mr Horace
 Walpole, A*, 17 quoted, 19
 Dickens, Charles, 165
 Disraeli, Isaac, 167, 168
Dissertations, Moral and Critical, 34 note
 Dobson, Mrs. Susannah, 33
Don Belliarus of Greece, 4 note
Don Quixote, 3
 Doughty, Oswald, 7
 Douglas, Sylvester, Lord Glenbervie, 166
 Drake, Nathan, 116, 131
Duke of Clarence, The, 107, 134
 D'Urfé, 8

E

*Earl Strongbow, or the History of Richard
 de Clare*, 111
 Eastlake, C. L., *History of the Gothic
 Revival*, 118 note
Edward II, 110
Eleonora, from the Sorrows of Werther, 145
 Elizabeth, Lady Craven, Margravine of
 Anspach, 64, 78
 E.M.F., 107
Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle, 80-82,
 83, 102, 124, 128
English Comic Writers, The, 167
Evelina, 58, 59, 71 note
Exiles, The, 47
*Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of
 Literature*, quoted, 19

F

Faerie Queene, The, 32, 74
Fairy Tales and Romances, 16 note
Fairy Tales, A Selection, 59
Falstaff Letters, The, 111

Fashionable Friend, The, 35
Felixmarte of Hircania, 4
Female Quixote, The, 3
Ferdinand Count Fathom, 45
 Fielding, Henry, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 36, 55, 61,
 75, 102
Four Facardins, The, 16
 Fox, J., 135, 154
 Fuller, Miss Anne, 94, 96, 100, 131

G

Gabrielle de Vergy, An Historical Tale, 105
 German Literature, 62-63, 143, 145-149
Ghost-Seer, The, 146, 147, 148, 149
 Gibbes, Miss, 62
 Godwin, William, 161
 Goethe, 146
Golden Mirror, The, 146
Gossip's Story, A, 159
 Gothic, the word, vii, 18, 44 note, 68, 73,
 78, 99, 112, 157
Grand Cyrus, The, 3, 4, 6
 Gray, Thomas, 6, 7, 21, 23
 Green, Thomas, 19, 167
 Green, W. C., 161
 Grose's *Antiquities*, 118 note

H

Hamilton, Count Anthony, 16
Hamlet, 94, 95
 Hardinge, George, 168
Haunted Castle, The, 119
Haunted Cavern, The, 119, 145, 157
Haunted Priory, The, 119, 135-139
 Haywood, Mrs., 1
 Hazlitt, William, 167
 Helme, Elizabeth, 75, 84
Heloise, or the Siege of Rhodes, 97, 100, 101
*Henrietta of Gerstenfeld, A German
 Story*, 62
Herman of Unna, 123, 146, 147
Hermit, The, 37-38
Hermitage, The, 22, 37, 38-43, 47, 50, 94,
 96
 Hilditch, Miss Ann, 62, 76, 84
 Historical Novel, *The*, 60, 84-118
*History and Antiquities of the County
 Palatine of Durham*, 38
History of Charles Wentworth, Esq., The, 27
History of Edward Prince of Wales, The,
 85
History of English Poetry, 33
 Hobbes, Thomas, 1
 Homespun, Prudentia, see West, Mrs.
 Jane
Horrid Mysteries, 147
 Horsley-Curties, T. J., 161
 Hurd, Richard, 3, 32, 34, 35, 85
 Hutchinson, William, 38, 47, 50, 53

I

Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century, 38
Incognita, or Love and Duty Reconcil'd, 21 note
Italian, The, 120, 127, 128, 147
Ivankhoe, vii, 92, 116

J

Jarvis, Charles, 3
 Jenks, Jacquetta Agneta Maria, See Beckford, William
 Jephson, Robert, 29 note, 162
 Johnson, Dr, 4, 24, 25
Joseph Andrews, 2
Juliet Grenville, or the History of the Human Heart, 28

K

Kahlert, K. F., 147
 Kelly, Mrs Isabella, 153
 Killen, Alice M., 11 note
Kilverstone Castle, or the Heir Restored, 43
Knights, or Sketches of the Heroic Age, The, 114-117
 Kramer, 147

L

La Calpanède, 1
 Lansdell, Sarah, 152
 Lathom, Francis, 161
 Lee, Miss Sophia, 82, 86, 87, 88, 89, 98, 100, 108, 114, 118
 Leland, John, 48, 50
 Lennox, Charlotte, 4
Letters of Charlotte during her Connection with Werther, 145
Letters on Chivalry and Romance, 3, 32
 Lewis, Matthew Gregory, 41, 102, 149, 154, 162
Literary History of the Troubadours, 33
 Lockhart, 164
Longsword, 48, 52 and note, 55, 88, 89, 92
Lord Winworth, 61
Louisa, or the Cottage on the Moor, 59, 61, 75-76, 83
Love's Labour Lost, 3 note
Lucy, A Novel, 134
Lyrical Ballads, The, 59

M

Macaulay, Thomas Babington, 5, 167
Macbeth, 94, 95, 152, 164
 Mackenzie, Mrs. Anne Maria, 108, 110, 116
 Mackenzie, Henry, 146
 Macpherson, James, 32, 85

Manfredi, Baron St Osmund, 145, 152-153
 Manley, Mrs., 1
Maria, 66-70, 78, 83, 130
 Mathias, T. J., *The Pursuits of Literature*, 151, 157, 163
 Maturin, Charles Robert, 101, 102, 162
 Meeke, Mrs., 161
Melissa and Marcia, or the Sisters, 78-80, 83, 84, 124, 128
Melmoth the Wanderer, 76
Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry, 34
Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, 108-109
Midsummer Night's Dream, A, 5
 Milton, John, 5, 35
Minstrel, The, 114, 116
Miscellaneous Pieces, In Prose, 43
Modern Anecdote of the Ancient Family of the Kinkvervankotsdarsprakengotschdarns, 64-66, 78
Modern Novel Writing, or the Elegant Enthusiast, 159 ✓
Monk, The, 107, 123, 149-152, 154, 161, 162
 Moore, John, 134
Mysteries Elucidated, A Novel, 110-111, 134
Mysteries of Udolpho, The, 70, 107, 110, 119, 122, 126, 128, 132, 134, 140, 143, 148, 149, 152, 153, 160
Mysterious Mother, The, vii, 73, 120, 133, 167, 169
Mysterious Warning, The, 134

N

Necromancer, The, 147, 149
 Nichols, John, 38, 168
Niece, or The History of Sukey Thornby, The, 62
Northanger Abbey, 134

O

Observations on the Faerie Queene, 31
Old English Baron, The, 27, 47-54, 55, 108, 121, 139, 140
Old Manor House, The, 80
 Ossian, 44, 68
Othello, 94

P

Palmer, John, 145
Palmerin in England, 4 note
Pamela, 2
 Parsons, Mrs. Eliza, 134
 Peacock, Miss Lucy, 61, 73, 74
 Percy, Thomas, 33, 34
Peregrinus Proteus, 146
Pharamond, 7

Pleasures of the Imagination, The, 7
 Pinkerton, *Catalogue of Voyages and Travels*, 106 note
Poems of Ossian, 32
Polly Honeycombe, 2
 Pope, Alexander, 5, 23, 27
Prince Arthur, an Allegorical Romance, 74
Progress of Romance, The, quoted, 4, 34, 47

Q

"Quadruple Alliance," 6
Queenhoo-Hall, A Romance, 117

R

Radcliffe, Mrs Ann, the sources of her novels, 120-123, her theory of terror, 124, 128-130, contemporary recognition of her influence, 107, 131, 133, 143-144, 119-132, *et passim*
Radzivil, A Romance, 130
Rambles of Fancy, The, 61, 73, 83
Ranspach, or the Mysteries of the Castle, 145
 Reade, Charles, 165
Recess, The, viii, 60, 82, 86, 87, 88, 89-92, 93, 99, 100, 101, 105, 121, 134
 Reeve, Clara, viii, 4, 32, 34, 47, 53, 54, 55, 68, 100, 104, 108, 110, 114, 116, 120
Reginald Du Bray, An Historic Tale, 52, 88-89, 90, 92, 100, 101, 120, 121, 131
Reliques of Ancient Poetry, The, 5, 33
 Reynolds, Myra, *Treatment of Nature in English Poetry*, 106 note
 Richardson, Samuel, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 36, 55, 102
Ring, a Novel, in a Series of Letters, The, 71-73, 83, 84, 102, 121, 124, 128, 131
Robbers, The, 146, 154
 Robinson, Mrs Mary, 133, 134
Roman Terrifiant ou Roman Noir, Le, 11 note
 Romance, controversy on the origins of, 33 and note
 Romance and novel, their distinction, 28 note
Romance of the Forest, The, 121, 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 133, 134, 138, 139, 152
Rosa de Montmorten, 62, 76-78, 83, 84, 102, 124, 128
Royal Captives, The, 144
Ruins of Avondale Priory, 145, 153

S

St. Bernard's Priory, 60, 92-94, 97, 100, 101, 121, 131
St. Leon, 161

Santa-Maria, or the Mysterious Pregnancy, 145, 154-157
 Schiller, 146, 147, 154
School of Virtue, The, 62
 Scott, Sir Walter, his opinion of *The Castle of Otranto*, 170-171, other references, 87, 113, 116, 117, 118, 133, 143, 146, 164, 169, 170
Scudéry, Madeline de, 1, 6, 15
Secret History of Pythagoras, The, 10 note
Siege of Belgrade, An Historical Novel, The, 105
 Seward, Anna, 26, 131
 Shakespeare, William, 10, 15, 16, 61, 94, 95 and note, 96, 114, 131, 140
Sicilian Romance, The, 121, 123, 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 133, 134, 138
Sicilian Romance, or the Apparition on the Cliffs, 135
 Siddons, Henry, 106, 135
 Sidney, Sir Philip, 15, 35
Sir Bertrand, A Fragment, viii, 22, 35, 44-47, 84, 124, 140
Sir Charles Grandison, 7
 Smith, Mrs. Charlotte, 81, 83
 Smollett, Tobias George, 2, 7, 36, 45
Solitary Castle, The, 158, 159
Sorcerer, The, 140, 147, 148, 149
Sorrows of Werther, The, 57, 145, 146
Spectator, The, 3
 Spenser, Edmund, 10, 74
Spirit of the Public Journals for 1797, The, 158
Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, 117
Statue Room, An Historical Tale, The, 105
 Sterne, Laurence, 2
 Strawberry Hill, 5, 8, 17, 18, 20, 56, 99
 Strutt, Joseph, 117, 118
 Supernatural, the use of, 95, 138, 140
 Swift, Jonathan, 1

T

"Tale of Terror," the evolution of, 71, 118-132
Tales of Terror, or More Ghosts, 138
Tancred, A Tale of Ancient Times, 135
Terrible School, The, reaction against it, 157-160; other references, 106, 141, 166
 Theory of Fiction, 26-28, 58-62, 86-87, 140-141
 Thomson, James, 5
Travels in Italy, Greece, and the Ionian Islands, 168
Tristram Shandy, 7

U

Universal Magazine, The, 23, 55

V

- Valombrosa, or the Venetian Nun*, 143
Vancenza, or the Dangers of Credulity, 133
Vathek, 60, 75
Victim of Magical Delusion, The, 147
Victoria, 59
Virgil, 6
Voltaire, 95

W

- Walpole, Horace, Lord Orford; his importance, vii, attitude towards contemporary literature and fiction, 5, 7, increasing interest in the "Gothic" and the inception of *The Castle of Otranto*, 8-10, 29, his opinion of *The Castle of Otranto*, 9-11, 17, 101, 103, 166, his opinion of *Sir Bertrand*, 47, 124, opinion of *The Old English Baron*, 48; his innovations, 11, 18, 21, 96; references to him in contemporary literature, 24, 25, 56, 64, 66, 68, 70, 135, 162, 166, 167, 168, 169; his influence, 36-37, 63, 66, 71, 82-84, 96, 100, 103, 111, 116, 117, 124, 128, 132, 138, 139,

- 142, 149, 164-165; contemporary recognition of his influence, 38, 70, 98, 99, 110, 133, 139-140, 163-164, 171
Wandering Jew, 146
 Warburton, Bishop William, 3, 23, 29 note, 31
 Warton, Thomas, 8, 9, 15, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 85, 101
Waverley Novels, The, 113, 118, 169
Wedding Ring, or the History of Miss Sidney, The, 27
 West, Mrs. Jane, 159
 White, James, 111, 113, 116
 Wilkinson, Sarah, 161
William of Normandy, 86
William Wallace, or the Highland Hero, 106
 Williams, Gilly, 166, 167
 Williams, H. W., 168

Y

- Yearsley, Ann, 144

Z

- Zeluco*, 134